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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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CONTINGENCY EDITION

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023

Free to Deployed Areas



JONATHAN SNYDER/Stars and Stripes

President Joe Biden chats with Col. Richard Rusnok, commander of Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, at the base in Japan on Thursday.

## Biden touches down in Japan

### President arrives at Marine base ahead of G-7 summit

By JONATHAN SNYDER  
*Stars and Stripes*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — President Joe Biden arrived Thursday afternoon aboard Air Force One at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni south of Hiroshima to attend a summit of the world's leading industrial nations this weekend.

The president stepped from Air Force One onto the tarmac, where he was met by MCAS Iwakuni commander Col. Richard Rusnok and Sgt. Maj. Adam Gharati. Alongside them were U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel; Rear Adm. Takuhiro Hiragi, commander of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's Fleet

Air Wing 31; and Iwakuni city Mayor Yoshihiko Fukuda.

Biden's visit began with a face-to-face meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, whose home city of Hiroshima is the host for the Group of Seven summit this year. The city, where the United States dropped the first atomic bomb in World War II, is the backdrop for discussions expected to include the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"There will be discussions about the battlefield," national security adviser Jake Sullivan said aboard Air Force One, according to The Associated Press on Thursday. He said the G-7 leaders would work to seal off any loopholes in

sanctions so their effect can be maximized, according to AP.

After landing at MCAS Iwakuni, Biden met with approximately 300 service members from the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. The president then left the base in the Marine One helicopter bound for Hiroshima and his brief meeting with Kishida.

Biden last traveled to Japan approximately one year ago, when he landed at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo in the midst of a festival which was attended by thousands of Ameri-

SEE BIDEN ON PAGE 4

## DODEA schools adopt new gender-neutral dress code

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Students at Defense Department schools will no longer have to measure the lengths of their skirts and shorts, or leave their ball caps at home on bad hair days.

The Department of Defense Education Activity has approved a new gender-neutral student dress code that goes into effect July 1 at all 160 DODEA schools in the Pacific, Europe and Americas regions, including Puerto Rico and Cuba.

The policy doesn't include language that focuses on one gender exclusively or single out styles of dress specific to a race or religion, said Joy Medley, a DODEA education specialist.

How much skin students may show above the knees will no longer be measured by inch counts or "the fingertip rule," which required a hemline to extend below the fingertips with arms hanging to the sides.

The updated guidelines posted on DODEA's website simply call for "tops with sleeves" and "solid

SEE DRESS ON PAGE 3



AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

**Defense Department schools are set to enforce a new dress code that will apply worldwide beginning July 1.**



BUSINESS/WEATHER

Japan racks up trade deficit despite exports rising

Associated Press  
TOKYO — Japan racked up a trade deficit in April, marking the 21st month in a row of deficits, although it declined dramatically compared to a year ago, as exports recovered, according to government data released Thursday.  
Japan's trade deficit totaled \$3.2 billion in April, as exports gained 2.6% and imports fell 2.3%, the Finance Ministry said.  
Vehicle shipments recovered, along with the export of auto parts and electronics products, as the

supply crunch related to social restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic eased.  
Imports fell as soaring energy costs subsided compared to a year ago, when oil prices jumped for various reasons including uncertainty over the war in Ukraine.  
Japan imports almost all its gasoline and natural gas. The weak yen also helped send imports higher.  
Given these various factors, Japan's trade deficit in April dwindled to about half of what it was a

year earlier, at nearly 855 billion yen.  
Although a negative for imports, the weak yen serves as a positive for exports by raising the value of overseas earnings when converted into yen.  
The dollar is now trading at about 137 Japanese yen, up from about 134 yen a year ago.  
Japan marked a \$5.8 billion trade surplus with the U.S. in April, with exports to the U.S. rising 10.5%, while imports edged up just 1%.

EXCHANGE RATES			
Military rates			
Euro costs (May 19)	\$1.06	Switzerland (Franc)	0.9043
British pound (May 19)	\$1.28	Thailand (Baht)	34.45
Japanese yen (May 19)	132.00	Turkey (NewLira)	19.7904
South Korean won (May 19)	1296.00	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Commercial rates		INTEREST RATES	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770	Prime rate	8.25
Britain (Pound)	1.2423	Interest Rates Discount rate	5.75
Canada (Dollar)	1.3495	Federal funds market rate	5.08
China (Yuan)	7.0414	3-month bill	5.25
Denmark (Krone)	6.9094	30-year bond	3.87
Egypt (Pound)	30.8990		
Euro	0.9278		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8277		
Hungary (Forint)	348.49		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6503		
Japan (Yen)	138.40		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3072		
Norway (Krone)	10.9183		
Philippines (Peso)	55.88		
Poland (Zloty)	4.22		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7498		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3483		
South Korea (Won)	1339.58		

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**MILITARY MATTERS**

MILITARY

# Marines resupply subs in Pacific for 1st time

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Marine helicopter squadron from Okinawa for the first time delivered supplies to an Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine transiting the Philippine Sea, a practice integral to the Corps’ island-hopping doctrine.

Two CH-53E Super Stallions on May 9 dropped “mission-essential equipment” to the USS Maine by a “vertical replenishment,” according to a III Marine Expeditionary Force news release Wednesday. The Super Stallions are assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Airborne delivery allows Navy assets like the Maine to resupply without disrupting “maritime security operations,” a key tenet of the Marine Corps’ role as a “stand-in force,” the statement said.

Stand-in force is a concept born from Commandant Gen. David Berger’s Force Design 2030, the operational doctrine at all levels of the Marine Corps, especially in the Pacific where the U.S. military is training to deter potential Chinese aggression and maintain open sea lanes. It calls for inserting smaller, mobile units within



PHOTOS BY EMILY WEISS/U.S. Marine Corps

**Aboard a CH-53E Super Stallion, Staff Sgt. Joseph McDonnell lowers supplies to the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Maine in the Philippine Sea, on May 9.**

range of enemy missiles to seize and hold key islands and deny enemy vessels access to the surrounding seas.

The “1st MAW’s persistent and forward presence makes it the backbone of the stand-in force’s

expeditionary capability,” Col. Christopher Murray, Marine Aircraft Group 36 commander, said in the release. “The intricacies of seamlessly sustaining the force through naval integration and aviation-delivered logistics is a

testament to our adaptability, readiness, and ability to project power within the Indo-Pacific.”

The May 9 drop was the first of its kind to an Ohio-class submarine, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing spokesman Maj. Rob Martins said

in an email Thursday.

The Marine Corps does not discuss mission-specific cargo due to operational security, Martins said. Photos posted to Defense Department websites showed a black, plastic case being attached to one of the Super Stallion’s integrated hoists.

The hoists secure the cargo, guide its descent to a designated area, release and retrieve the hoist cable, Martins said. The Super Stallion, a heavy-lift variant of the CH-53 helicopter, can carry 16 tons of cargo at sea level for 50 nautical miles and return.

Martins declined to discuss how often the sea-service replenishes other submarine classes in the region. He referred all submarine-related questions to Pacific Fleet’s Submarine Force, which did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Thursday.

The Maine was commissioned in 1995 and is homeported at Naval Submarine Base Bangor, Wash. The nuclear-powered sub hosts 155 sailors and features an armament of MK-48 torpedoes and up to 20 Trident II D-5 ballistic missiles.

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## Senator to Austin: Move Space Force HQ to Ala.

By LEE ROOP  
*al.com*

U.S. Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala., told U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin Wednesday why his department and the U.S. Air Force should stand by the decision to put the U.S. Space Command headquarters on Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville.

Britt spoke a day after NBC News reported that President Joe Biden is preparing to reverse the decision to name Redstone the permanent headquarters for USSPACECOM. The story said the president is planning to leave the headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo., where the command was started.

“As the leader of the Department of Defense, I implore you to cut through the politics and make a final basing decision for the U.S. Space Command headquarters,” Britt said. “As you know, Huntsville’s Redstone Arsenal finished first in both the Air Force’s Evaluation Phase and the Selection Phase. That leaves no doubt that the Air Force’s decision to choose Redstone as the preferred basing



BRITT.SENATE.GOV

**Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala.**

location was correct and it was done on the merits. That decision should remain in the Air Force’s purview.”

“Media reports have said that the president and those in the White House are preparing to prioritize partisan political considerations at the expense of our national security, our military modernization, and our force readiness, and for me that is deeply disturbing. “When you look at this, you said earlier, in order to compete and succeed against China we must use all of our tools. When you look at that, we know those tools are there at Redstone Arsenal.”

Britt did not ask Austin to comment and he did not speak on the base location report.

## Dress: DODEA aim to use violations as ‘teachable moments,’ not distract from class

FROM PAGE 1

clothing (not transparent or translucent) that fully covers the top and bottom, from armpit to mid-thigh.”

The rules do away with myriad standards that sometimes differed between schools on the same base. Some barred spaghetti straps, halter tops, baggy pants, “excessively tight” Spandex and headbands, among other things.

The new dress code is easier for families to follow and simpler for principals to enforce, Medley said.

Ripped jeans will be allowed, which is something Medley said students asked to have approved. So will hats, which girls particularly wanted for “bad hair days,” she said.

However, the focus on gender neutrality means that the new permissiveness will apply to all.

“We couldn’t say girls can wear hats, but boys couldn’t,” Medley added.

Most schools didn’t allow students to wear baseball caps inside buildings, she said, a rule that reflects the military etiquette of removing hats indoors. They will be allowed as long as the brim doesn’t obscure the face.

Shoes must be safe for school, with slippers banned unless approved by the principal. Open toe shoes with a strap across the heel are allowed.

“The goal, from the outset, was to create a dress code that is equitable, nonbiased and supports the learning environment while allowing individual expression,” said Will Griffin, a DODEA spokesman.

Much of what students aren’t allowed to wear hasn’t changed, Griffin said. That includes anything that promotes violence, contains curse words, or depicts drugs, alcohol or tobacco products. “If a student couldn’t wear a T-shirt with a big marijuana leaf last year, that is still true,” Griffin said.

Clothing deemed discriminatory, pornographic, obscene or promoting something illegal still isn’t allowed.

When the new rules go into effect, minor violations such as wearing something off the shoulder won’t get a student suspended or sent to the nurse’s office until a parent can bring a change of clothes.

Across the United States, stories of dress code issues have drawn national attention, as

schools battle with parents, students and civil rights advocates on the fairness of the standards and the disciplinary measures enforcing them.

DODEA is focusing on “teachable moments,” where a teacher and student discuss what’s permissible, Medley said.

“Our goal is for our students not to lose any instructional time” because of what they’re wearing, she said.

Discipline might be appropriate for “a repeated thing or attitude of the student,” Medley said.

DODEA’s education policy division, along with a civil rights steering committee and diversity, equity and inclusion specialists began revising the dress code in fall 2021. They reviewed U.S. trends and took input from school and community members.

Some 460 responses were received from students, parents, school personnel and administrators during a public comment period, with students providing the most feedback, Medley said.

“They wanted to be able to express themselves, to have their own individuality and to feel like they were part of the decision of what they could wear to school,” she said.



PACIFIC

Biden, Kishida tout alliance ahead of summit

Associated Press

HIROSHIMA, Japan — President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met Thursday aiming to showcase the strength of their alliance ahead of a Group of Seven summit where leading democracies will tackle the challenges of Russia’s war in Ukraine, North Korea’s ballistic nuclear threats and an increasingly forceful China.

Biden recalled that Kishida said during a January visit to Washington that the world faced one of the “most complex” security environments in recent history.

“I couldn’t agree with you more,” Biden told the Japanese prime minister as they sat with their aides at a conference table. “When our countries stand together, we stand stronger and I believe the whole world is safer when we do.”

Kishida noted that as the global tensions brought the United States and Japan closer together, that “the cooperation has evolved in leaps and bounds.”

The Kishida family’s home city of Hiroshima will host the gathering of major industrialized nations known as the G-7. The setting of Hiroshima, where the U.S. dropped the first nuclear bomb in 1945 during World War II, carries newfound resonance. Members of the G-7, which also includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Union, are grappling with the territorial ambitions of Russia and China, two nuclear powers.

Biden is also appearing on the world stage while trying to manage a divide back in the U.S. on how to raise the government’s debt limit. He opted to cut short what was supposed to be an eight-



SUSAN WALSH/AP

President Joe Biden greets troops upon his arrival at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in Iwakuni, Japan, on Thursday. Biden made the stop on his way to attend the G-7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan.

day trip to Asia, so he can return to Washington to try to avoid a potentially catastrophic default in June that could ripple across the global economy. It’s a drama that reveals how internal U.S. politics can spill over into global forums.

While aboard Air Force One, Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, told reporters that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine looms large as a G-7 topic. He added that leaders would discuss the state of play on the battlefield and sealing loopholes to strengthen sanctions that have been levied against Moscow.

Biden’s first stop in Japan on Thursday was to greet U.S. troops at Marine Corps Air Station Iwa-

kuni, before he headed to Hiroshima for talks with the Japanese prime minister.

Biden and Kishida also discussed economic matters. They addressed efforts to bolster supply chains for critical minerals, new partnerships between U.S. and Japanese companies and universities and efforts to promote renewable energy, according to a White House readout of the meeting.

Kishida had planned to discuss further strengthening of deterrence and response capability with Biden in the face of China’s assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as confirming the importance of the Taiwan Strait

for global peace and stability. China has said that self-governing Taiwan should come under its rule.

The U.S. and Japanese leaders also talked about ways to reinforce their three-way partnership with South Korea, which signed an agreement in April with the U.S. to strengthen their tools for deterring a potential nuclear attack by North Korea.

Kishida and Biden will hold a trilateral summit with South Korea’s Yoon Suk Yeol on the sidelines of the G-7 summit. But Kishida is in a complicated position by discussing efforts to respond to nuclear threats by North Korea with Japan’s history of also calling

for a world free from nuclear arms, said Kan Kimura, a Kobe University professor and an expert on South Korea.

“Of course, Kishida is walking a fine line,” said Christopher Johnstone, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. “He recognizes the need for the nuclear umbrella, Japan’s dependence on U.S. extended deterrence—that that’s more vital than ever, frankly, in the current security environment.”

There are outstanding issues between the U.S. and Japan. During his January meeting with Kishida, Biden brought up the case of Lt. Ridge Alkonis, a U.S. Navy officer deployed to Japan who last year was sentenced to three years in prison after pleading guilty to the negligent driving deaths of two Japanese citizens in May 2021, according to a senior administration official. Alkonis also agreed to pay the victims \$1.65 million in restitution. His family is seeking his release, saying he was detained until he confessed.

The early return to Washington to deal with the debt limit means Biden will skip planned stops in Papua New Guinea and Australia, where he was to take part in a meeting of the so-called Quad partnership with leaders of Australia, India and Japan. The Papua New Guinea visit would have been the first to the Pacific Island country by a sitting U.S. president.

The White House said Biden phoned the prime minister of Papua New Guinea, James Marape, while traveling on Air Force One to “personally” convey the need to return to Washington. Biden invited Marape and other Pacific leaders to Washington later this year.

Alkonis supporters push for release

BY ALEX WILSON  
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. senator and a former national security adviser, ahead of President Joe Biden’s arrival Thursday in Hiroshima for the G-7 summit, called for the return of a U.S. Navy officer imprisoned in Japan.

Robert O’Brien, formerly the national security adviser in the Trump administration, in a Wednesday tweet, asked Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to release Lt. Ridge Alkonis as a “humanitarian gesture.”

Formerly a weapons officer assigned to the destroyer USS Benfold, Alkonis is 10 months into a three-year prison sentence for negligent driving that caused the deaths of two Japanese citizens and injured a third in May 2021.

“Reuniting him with his family will be seen as an act of friendship &

magnanimity by the American people,” O’Brien tweeted after meeting with the sailor’s wife, Brittany, in Tokyo.

The following day, as Biden was en route to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in Japan, Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, called on Biden to return with Alkonis aboard Air Force One at the conclusion of the trip.

“This has gone on long enough,” Lee said in a video tweeted Thursday by Fox News Radio reporter Ryan Schmelz. “This is a man who has faithfully served his country, and it’s time for him to come home.”

Lee has remained an outspoken supporter of Alkonis and critic of the way the Japanese handled Alkonis’ case. Lee on March 1 accused Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi of backtracking on a deal to release the officer to U.S. custody.

The following day, Lee issued a

24-hour ultimatum to Kishida that threatened to reconsider a U.S.-Japan weapons deal if Alkonis wasn’t returned to U.S. Navy custody.

He also sponsored an amendment to the Defense Department’s 2023 budget that extended pay and benefits for Alkonis, which ultimately passed.

Alkonis’ imprisonment has attracted the attention of numerous U.S. officials, including Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, since he first reported to prison in July 2022.

Harris, during a visit to Tokyo in September, discussed Alkonis’ case with Kishida, a White House official told Stars and Stripes at the time.

In February, Brittany Alkonis spoke briefly with Biden about the situation after his State of the Union address. Biden, at the time, told her “we’re not giving up and we’re go-



Navy Lt. Ridge Alkonis

ing to get him home,” according to a tweet from Real Clear News reporter Philip Wegmann.

Other Alkonis supporters include Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., and Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif., who, along with 30 other members of Congress, sent Biden a letter in October urging him to “use all tools available to ensure Lt. Alkonis be returned to the United States.”

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Biden: G-7 to discuss Russian war in Ukraine

FROM PAGE 1

cans and Japanese visitors.

During that swing through Asia, the president met with Kishida, as well as the leaders of India, South Korea and Australia.

The G-7 summit is an international forum held annually for the leaders of the member states France, the U.S., the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada.

Biden cut short his trip to this year’s summit by canceling his plans to visit Papa New Guinea and Australia to return to the U.S. to continue negotiations aimed at raising the federal debt limit.

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PACIFIC

Higher electric bills coming for US personnel

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

TOKYO — U.S. military personnel living off base in Japan will pay significantly more for electricity under price hikes approved by the Japanese government this week. Japan's Cabinet on Tuesday gave electric power companies a green light to increase prices starting next month, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said during a news conference that day.

News of the increase arrived along with a taste of summer. Thermometers flirted with 90 degrees Thursday in Tokyo, a city known for killer heat waves and

unceasing demands for air conditioning.

Seven out of 10 major electric companies in the country had asked to raise prices due to an increase in the cost of imported energy such as natural gas, according to a statement by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry on Tuesday.

Customers will pay between 14% and 42% more for power under the price hike, Matsuno said.

Tokyo Electric Power Co., which supplies electricity mainly in the Tokyo metropolitan area, will raise its prices 15.9% on average, according to a news release posted on its website on Tuesday.

U.S. military communities in

the metro area include Yokota Air Base, headquarters of U.S. Forces Japan; Yokosuka Naval Base, homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet; Camp Zama, headquarters of U.S. Army Japan; and Naval Air Facility Atsugi.

Okinawa Electric Power Co., which supplies power to the island that's home to 80,000 U.S. military personnel family members, will raise prices 33.3% on average, according to a statement posted on its website Tuesday.

Tohoku Electric Power Co., which supplies power in Aomori prefecture, home to Misawa Air base and the Air Force's 35th Fighter Wing, will hike prices 25.47% on average, according to a

news release posted on its website Tuesday.

"Import fuel costs have greatly increased due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 while we were experiencing damage to financial bases from earthquakes, which occurred offshore of Fukushima prefecture in 2021 and 2022," Tohoku company president Kojiro Higuchi said at a news conference Tuesday, according to a transcript posted on the company's website.

Air Force retiree Tony Hughes, who lives in Akiruno, near Yokota, and works as a private contractor on U.S. bases in Tokyo, said his electricity costs have already climbed in recent years.

"I like the air conditioner," he said while cooling off at the Yokota food court from 91-degree spring heat on Thursday.

Hughes estimated he and his wife pay \$100 a month for electricity in their two-bedroom home, up from around \$73 a month in 2016.

The couple are careful about how they use air conditioning lately and Hughes washes his clothes at a base laundromat to cut costs running a dryer, Hughes said.

"We both work all day," he said. "If we were at home all day it (the power bill) would be double that easily."

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Experts say Guam missile defense project already overdue

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

A proposed missile-defense system for Guam may provide the island with absolute protection from missile threats, including hypersonic missiles, but the project is already overdue, according to missile defense experts.

Guam's Enhanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense System is expected to deploy in long stages starting in 2027, according to the Missile Defense Agency. But with looming threats from potential adversaries like China and North Korea, that timeline may not suffice, according to Riki Ellison, founder of the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance.

"We're not going fast enough," he told Stars and Stripes by phone Wednesday.

The project, a joint effort between several Defense Department agencies, is described as a "comprehensive, persistent, 360-degree" defense of the U.S. island territory against ballistic, cruise and hypersonic missiles.

Exact figures for the project's cost haven't been disclosed, but the Pentagon is requesting \$1.5 billion for the "defense of Guam against the missile threat from China" in fiscal year 2024, according to a March 13 DOD news release. The program is expected to incorporate the Army's Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System and the Navy's Aegis Combat System found on Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyers.



Guam is home to major U.S. military installations, including Naval Base Guam, Andersen Air Force Base and the new Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz.

ALEX WILSON/Stars and Stripes

Aegis is already capable of intercepting some hypersonic missiles — weapons that travel at Mach 5, or around 1 mile per second — but they can only do so within a relatively small window during a missiles final phase of flight.

The Defense Department is developing a new system — a "glide phase interceptor" — to intercept hypersonic missiles during the longest portion of their flight, a

much larger window, but that technology likely won't be available until the early 2030s, MDA director Vice Adm. Jon Hill said at a March 14 news conference.

This poses a problem, because the United States needs that technology "this decade," according to Tom Karako, a missile defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"We don't get to choose which

missiles China uses to hold Guam at risk," he told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday.

Hypersonic missiles can have predictable or maneuverable flight paths, which along with high speed and low altitude trajectories, make them "extremely difficult to detect and counter," Air Force Gen. Glen VanHerck, head of U.S. Northern Command, told the Senate Armed Forces Sub-

committee on Strategic Forces on May 9.

Without a glide phase interceptor, Guam's defense is limited to "what works today," Ellison said. Aegis systems, for example, may be deployed on Guam in the near future.

However, Ellison advised against waiting for newer technology rather than investing in proven technology right now.

"It's really back down to when you think that threat is coming," he said. "When do you think that China will make moves on Taiwan?"

Guam is home to major military installations, including Naval Base Guam, Andersen Air Force Base and the new Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz. The island has long been called the U.S. military's "tip of the spear" in the Indo-Pacific, owing to its proximity to the South China Sea, North Korea and China.

Blaz already has some defenses, such as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system, but those capabilities are often supplemented by guided-missile destroyers, Ellison said. Completion of the project may alleviate the need for those destroyers to protect Guam.

"That's probably the No. 1 driving point of this thing, is to get that done," Ellison said. "So those ships can do other missions and do what they're supposed to do."

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Guam announces plans for police to start aggressive seat belt checks

*Stars and Stripes*

The government of Guam is urging residents to buckle up or face the consequences as part of a ticketing campaign that coincides with the Memorial Day holiday.

Law enforcement agencies on the island

territory will be taking a "no excuses" approach to seat belt enforcement from Monday to June 4, writing citations "day and night," as part of a national "Click It or Ticket" campaign," according to a Guam Office of Highway Safety statement.

Anyone caught without a seat belt in Guam faces a \$100 fine for the first offense and \$200 for a second offense occurring in the same year, according to the release Monday.

Approximately half of the 26,325 passen-

ger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in the U.S. in 2021 were not wearing seat belts, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website.

Seat belts saved an estimated 15,000 lives in 2017 alone.



MILITARY

Marine corporal first active-duty convicted in riot

**By Tom Jackman**  
*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — An active-duty Marine who entered the Capitol with two of his colleagues from the Quantico Marine Corps Base on Jan. 6, 2021, and then spent more than 50 minutes wandering through the building, pleaded guilty Wednesday to a misdemeanor count of illegally parading or demonstrating in the Capitol. All three Marines work in intelligence gathering, including one at the National Security Agency headquarters in Maryland.

Cpl. Micah R. Coomer, 24, is allegedly the fourth active-duty Marine from Quantico to breach the Capitol on Jan. 6, and the first active-duty military member to plead guilty in the riot. A fifth active-duty service member, Navy sailor David Elizalde, was arrested last month in Arlington and accused of driving to the Capitol from his post on the USS Harry S. Truman, which was docked in Norfolk on the day of the riot. More than 1,000 people have been charged with participating in the attack on the Capitol.

Soon after Jan. 6, federal investigators were alerted to Coomer's Instagram account, where he posted photos from inside the Capitol during the riot and wrote that he was, "Glad to be apart [sic] of history."

Later in January 2021, according to an FBI affidavit seeking his arrest, Coomer wrote in a conversation with another Instagram user that "everything in this country is corrupt. We honestly need a fresh restart. I'm waiting for the boogaloo."

When the other user asked him, "What's a boogaloo," Coomer responded, "Civil war 2."

Coomer and two other men, Sgt. Joshua Abate and Sgt. Dodge Dale Hellonen, were assigned to the Marine Corps Information Operations Center in Quantico, according to reporting by the Intercept after their arrest. All three were arrested in January of this year, and it was not clear why the case wasn't filed for two years.

Before their arrests, all three were transferred to intelligence-related posts around the country, with Abate assigned to the Marine Cryptologic Support Battalion in the NSA headquarters at Fort Meade, and Hellonen working as a special communications signals analyst at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

Coomer remains on active duty as an intelligence surveillance reconnaissance system engineer at Camp Pendleton, Marine Corps officials said Wednesday. He enlisted in September 2018, the Marines said.

Abate and Hellonen's cases are pending.

Coomer, originally from Muncie, Ind., told U.S. District Judge Ana C. Reyes that he was currently stationed at Camp Pendleton near San Diego but otherwise said little during his brief hearing.

He declined to comment outside the courtroom after his plea. Reyes set his sentencing for Aug. 30.



Coomer



AUSTIN G. COLLINS/U.S. Navy

The guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke conducts a replenishment-at-sea with the Supply-class fast combat support ship USNS Supply, in 2022 in the Mediterranean Sea.

Russian conduct toward West seen as routine in Mediterranean

**By Menelaos Hadjicostis**  
*Associated Press*

LIMASSOL, Cyprus — A U.S. Navy commander said Wednesday there is "no significant change" in the conduct of Russian aircraft and warships toward Western naval and air assets in the eastern Mediterranean as Moscow's war in Ukraine grinds on.

Cmdr. Peter C. Flynn said that Russian warplanes and naval vessels have been conducting themselves professionally, like other military forces in the region, and there's been no indication of any heightened aggression or hostility.

"We obviously study what is going on in theater and you know that certainly plays a role in what we do and what we prepare for, but not a significant change" in the attitude of Russian forces, Flynn told The Associated Press aboard the USS Arleigh Burke.

The destroyer, one of the United States' most capable warships, is docked at Cyprus' main Limassol port.

Russia has a naval base in Tartus, Syria, the only such facility that Moscow has outside the former Soviet Union. In 2017, Moscow struck a deal with Syrian President Bashar Assad to extend its lease on Tartus for 49 years and keep up to 11 warships there, including nuclear-powered ones.

Tartus is 112 miles from Cyprus' eastern coastline.

F-35 jets from the U.K.'s newest aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, operating off Cyprus in June 2021 had stirred the interest of Russian warplanes, which tried to keep tabs on the cutting-edge warplanes.

The Arleigh Burke is three months into a 4½-month patrol mission in the region. It docked in Cyprus after operating in the Red Sea and passing through the Suez Canal. Since February, the destroyer has also operated above the Arctic Circle, the Baltic and North Seas and the eastern Atlantic.

"The Eastern Mediterranean is so important for maritime security and the history here is just so much," Flynn said.

The Arleigh Burke was the last U.S. Navy ship to sail in the Black Sea prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

"The Arleigh Burke has the most capable, offensive and defensive systems of any other U.S. ship," Flynn said. "So if we can't do it, nobody else can."

The ship is equipped with an array of missiles that can engage aircraft, submarines, other surface ships and even ballistic missiles in outer space.

Flynn said the destroyer has recently conducted joint maneuvers with Saudi and Egyptian naval vessels. Apart from projecting U.S. power, the ship aims to buttress ties with friendly nations, he said.

Prosecutors: Leak suspect was warned about handling classified info

*Associated Press*

BOSTON — Superiors of the Massachusetts Air National Guard member charged with leaking highly classified military documents had raised concerns internally on multiple occasions about his handling or viewing of classified information, according to a court filing Wednesday.

Justice Department lawyers made the disclosure in court papers urging a magistrate judge to keep Jack Teixeira behind bars while he awaits trial in the case stemming from the most consequential intelligence leak in years. The judge is expected to hear more arguments Friday on prosecutors' detention request and issue a ruling.

Teixeira is accused of sharing highly classified documents about top national security issues in a chatroom on Discord, a social media platform that started as a hangout for gamers. He has not yet entered a plea.

Prosecutors told the judge in their filing that Teixeira continued leaking documents even after he was admonished by superiors on two separate occasions last year over "concerning actions" he took related to classified information.

A September memo from the Air National Guard 102nd Intelligence Wing that prosecutors filed in court says Teixeira had been observed taking notes on classified intelligence information and putting the notes in his pocket. Teixeira was instructed at the time to no longer take notes in any form on classified intelligence information, the memo says.

Another memo from late October says a superior had been made aware that Teixeira was "potentially ignoring the cease-and-desist order on deep diving into intelligence information" given to him the month before. The memo says Teixeira attended a meeting and proceeded to ask "very specific questions." He was told again to focus on his job, not any "deep dives" into classified intelligence information.

Still, a third memo from February says Teixeira was again observed viewing information "that was not related to his primary duty and was related to the intelligence field." Teixeira "had previously been notified to focus on his own career duties and to not seek out intelligence products," the memo said.

"The Defendant even continued to share information with his online associates, defying these admonishments and taking further efforts to conceal his unlawful conduct," prosecutors wrote.

Lawyers for Teixeira, who was arrested last month on charges under the Espionage Act, are urging the judge to release Teixeira to his father's home, noting that the man didn't flee when media outlets began publishing his name shortly before his April 13 arrest. His lawyer told the judge last month that Teixeira "will answer the charges" and "will be judged by his fellow citizens."



EUROPE

# Russia fires 30 cruise missiles at Ukraine

## Kyiv officials say 29 of them shot down

By SUSIE BLANN  
*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia fired 30 cruise missiles against different parts of Ukraine early Thursday in the latest nighttime test of Ukrainian air defenses, which shot down 29 of them, officials said.

One person was killed and two were wounded by a Russian missile that got through and struck an industrial building in the southern region of Odesa, according to Serhiy Bratchuk, a spokesperson for the region's military administration.

Amid the recently intensified Russian air assaults, China said its special envoy met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during talks in Kyiv earlier this week with Ukraine's chief diplomat.

Beijing's peace proposal has so far yielded no apparent breakthrough in the war. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Thursday that the warring parties needed to "accumulate mutual trust" for progress to be made.

Ukrainian officials sought during the talks to recruit China's support for Kyiv's own peace plan, according to Ukraine's presidential office. Zelenskyy's proposal includes the restoration of his country's territorial integrity, the withdrawal of Russian forces and holding Russian President Vladimir Putin legally accountable for the invasion in February 2022.

Leaders of the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations gathering in Japan on Thursday were expected to denounce Russia's war and vow to keep helping



UKRAINIAN POLICE PRESS OFFICE/AP

Fragments of a Russian rocket which was shot down by Ukraine's air defense system are seen after a nighttime rocket attack in the Kyiv region of Ukraine on Thursday.

Ukraine fight Moscow. They were to hold "discussions about the battlefield" in Ukraine, according to Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser.

A Western official said Russia had built "potentially formidable" defensive lines on Ukrainian territory, including extensive minefields, and had more than 200,000 troops along the 600-mile front line, though it is unlikely to possess credible reserves.

As Ukraine receives sophisticated weapons systems from its Western allies, the Kremlin has started losing warplanes in areas previously deemed as safe, the official said, while Kyiv has proven able to shoot down Russia's hypersonic ballistic missiles — the most

advanced weapons in Moscow's arsenal.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military intelligence.

Meanwhile, Kremlin-installed authorities in occupied Crimea reported the derailment of eight train cars Thursday because of an explosion, prompting renewed suspicions about possible Ukrainian saboteur activity behind Russian lines. Russian state media reported that the train was carrying grain.

The state news agency RIA Novosti, quoting a source within the emergency services, said the incident occurred not far from the city of Simferopol. The Crimean Railway company said the derailment

was caused by "the interference of unauthorized persons" and that there were no casualties.

Ukraine officials refuse to comment on possible acts of sabotage. Ukraine's military intelligence spokesperson, Andriy Yusov, noted on Ukrainian television that Russian train lines "are also used to transport weapons, ammunition, armored vehicles."

Overnight, loud explosions were heard in Kyiv as the Kremlin's forces targeted the capital for the ninth time this month. It was a clear escalation after weeks of lull and before a much-anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive using newly supplied advanced Western weapons.

Debris fell on two Kyiv districts,

starting a fire at a garage complex. There was no immediate word about any victims, Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv military administration, said in a Telegram post.

Ukraine also shot down two Russian exploding drones and two reconnaissance drones, according to the authorities.

The missiles were launched from Russian sea, air and ground bases, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the Ukrainian commander in chief, wrote on Telegram.

Several waves of missiles were aimed at areas of Ukraine between 9 p.m. Wednesday and 5:30 a.m. Thursday, he said.

Russian forces used strategic bombers from the Caspian region and apparently fired X-101 and X-55-type missiles developed during Soviet times, Kyiv authorities said. Russia then deployed reconnaissance drones over the capital.

In the last major air attack on Kyiv, on Tuesday, Ukrainian air defenses bolstered by sophisticated Western-supplied systems shot down all the incoming missiles, officials said.

That attack used hypersonic missiles, which repeatedly have been touted by Putin as providing a key strategic advantage. The missiles, which are among the most advanced weapons in Russia's arsenal, are difficult to detect and intercept because of their hypersonic speed and maneuverability.

But sophisticated Western air defense systems, including American-made Patriot missiles, have helped spare Kyiv from the kind of destruction witnessed along the main front line in the country's east and south.

While the ground fighting is largely deadlocked along that front line, both sides are targeting each other's territory with long-range weapons.

# Putin deputy claims Baltic nations as provinces, insults NATO

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — A right-hand man of President Vladimir Putin lashed out this week on Twitter, suggesting that the Baltic states belong to Russia, that Poland is "temporarily occupied" and that NATO allies have "soiled themselves" in fear of Russia's military prowess.

Dmitry Medvedev, a former Russian prime minister and president, unloaded Tuesday in response to recent statements by French President Emmanuel Macron, who referred to Russia's war on Ukraine as a strategic failure that has left Moscow as a lackey of China.

"NATO member states go to bed at night, and wake up in the morn-

ing thinking of Russia," wrote Medvedev, who now serves as deputy chairman of Russia's security council under Putin.

Europe, and France in particular, were described by Medvedev as "an elderly wench" that is "satisfying all of the most perverted whims of Americans."

While the tweets largely involved hurling insults, Medvedev's comments on eastern flank allies are likely to reinforce regional angst that Russia's war ambitions extend beyond Ukraine's borders.

Nations that were once dominated by the Soviet Union were deemed "especially cowardly," such as "temporarily occupied Poland and our Baltic provinces," which have "soiled themselves," Medvedev said.



Medvedev

have become increasingly bellicose.

His frequent verbal attacks on Twitter come amid a faltering war effort in Ukraine, where more than 100,000 Russian troops have been killed or injured since February 2022, according to Pentagon estimates earlier this year. Initially, many observers assumed Moscow would march to a quick victory given its advantage in manpower and weaponry. However, Russia has

Once regarded by many Western observers as an easy-going alternative to Putin, Medvedev's public comments toward the West over the past year

gained little since the earliest stages of the war and now finds itself on the defensive.

The war also has led to other effects unanticipated by the Kremlin, such as the galvanization of NATO, which recently brought Finland into the alliance as the security pact's 31st member. Sweden, which like Finland was militarily unaligned during the Cold War, also is expected to soon join the alliance.

"President Putin went to war against Ukraine with a declared aim to get less NATO," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said in April during a gathering of allied leaders. "He wanted NATO to remove our forces, our structures from all allies that have joined after 1997 ... and he wanted NATO to make it absolutely clear that NA-

TO's door was closed for any new membership. He's getting the exact opposite."

NATO allies this summer are expected to update plans for defending against Russia along the alliance's eastern flank. The plans will involve thousands more troops operating at higher levels of readiness so that multinational battlegroups can be quickly reinforced in a crisis.

Medvedev, however, asserted that NATO was the strategic loser in connection with events in Ukraine.

"If there has indeed been a loss, it is that of the primitive NATO politics, with its underlying ambition to play the exceptional role in the 21st century," Medvedev said.



VETERANS

Sinise's band to honor Vietnam vets in DC

By Brian McElhiney  
Stars and Stripes

Actor and musician Gary Sinise remembers how Vietnam veterans were welcomed home from the war “all too well.”

Fifty years ago, U.S. combat operations ended in the Asian country. Sinise, who had just graduated from high school, missed being drafted, but many of his friends and family members were Vietnam veterans.

“Our nation had turned its back on them, and it was a very, very difficult time,” Sinise said recently from his home in Los Angeles. “I learned a lot from my wife’s two brothers and her sister’s husband — all served in the Army, they were all Vietnam veterans. I learned quite a bit, and then just a short time later I started supporting Vietnam veterans back in the early ’80s in the Chicago area. And that really began a lot of veterans support work for me.”

This year’s commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War has special meaning for Sinise, whose best-known role might still be as Army Lt. Dan Taylor, a platoon leader who loses his legs fighting in Vietnam in 1994’s “Forrest Gump.” His appropriately named The Lt. Dan Band will take the stage at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington on May 26, for a “Welcome Home” concert to honor Vietnam veterans.

The free concert is put on by The Gary Sinise Foundation, which since 2011 has furthered the actor’s mission to help service members and their families with concerts, events for Gold Star families and children, custom-built homes for injured veterans and more. Tickets are available at <https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/Welcome-Home>.

Fellow actor Joe Mantegna will serve as master of ceremonies; he and Sinise have presented the annual National Memorial Day Concert on the west lawn of the Capitol since 2007. That concert, featuring performances from the National Symphony Orchestra, the U.S. Ar-



Courtesy of The Gary Sinise Foundation

The Lt. Dan Band performs in Washington, D.C., in 2018. The band, led by actor Gary Sinise, will return to the nation’s capital on May 26 for a “Welcome Home” concert to honor Vietnam veterans.

my Chorus, the U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters and other military ensembles, returns May 28, making for a busy weekend for Sinise.

“We just want to give them the welcome home they didn’t get, but that they so deserve, and to remind them that their service mattered and that we care for them very much,” Sinise said.

Medal of Honor recipient, Vietnam veteran and retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Sammy Davis will speak to the crowd before the show. Sinise met Davis in Seattle in 2007, when Sinise was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s Bob Hope Award for Excellence in Entertainment.

Davis, who received the Medal of Honor in 1968 after risking his life to rescue three wounded service members in Vietnam, according to his citation, inspired many of the Vietnam War scenes in “Forrest Gump.” He also starred in “Forrest Gump,” although many might not recognize him. Footage in the film showing the title character, played by Tom Hanks, receiving the Medal of Honor from President Lyndon B.

Johnson was actually of Davis receiving his medal.

“They took Sammy’s head off and put Tom Hanks’ head on Sammy’s body and used the footage,” Sinise said. “... When I first met Sammy, and it goes back quite a number of years, he said, ‘Hey, I’m the real Forrest Gump!’ And we became very, very good friends; he’s done a lot of events with me and helped support my foundation.”

Since “Forrest Gump,” Sinise has gone on to become a staple in film and television, with starring roles in “Apollo 13,” “CSI: NY,” “Mission to Mars,” “13 Reasons Why” and more. But when he formed The Lt. Dan Band in 2003, he didn’t have as much name recognition.

“Lt. Dan has played a big role in my life, a role that I never would have suspected way back when, when the movie came out,” he said. “But who knew that we’d be attacked on Sept. 11 and we’d have so many ... real-life Lt. Dons coming back from war. I just wanted to help them out. So I started visiting them and they started recognizing me. I’d walk into a room and they wouldn’t



Julia Robinson

Sinise’s foundation has, since 2011, furthered his mission to help service members and veterans and their families.

know my name, but they knew Lt. Dan.”

The 13-piece band, which covers rock ‘n’ roll and country hits “from Adele to Stevie Wonder to Bruno Mars,” as The Gary Sinise Foundation’s website boasts, has since performed at military installations stateside and around the world, including Guantanamo Bay, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Japan, Okinawa and South Korea.

“The band never played in Iraq; I’ve been to Iraq, oh, five times over the years during the conflict and everything,” Sinise said. “But I did take the band to Afghanistan in 2009 and that was pretty cool. We were in Kandahar, and in Kandahar on the base there they had built something, it was like a boardwalk. It was this big circled area, and on the boardwalk you had, oh, like Tim Hortons food and a Subway and some different fast food shops. ... And we played right there on the boardwalk in Kandahar.”

Sinise sees parallels among veterans from Vietnam and the Afghanistan War, which concluded in August 2021 with the chaotic evacuation of allies and U.S. citizens from the country.

A new play, “Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret,” written by retired Green Beret and Army Lt. Col. Scott Mann about his experiences in Afghanistan, will hit the road next month through October for a five-city tour presented by The Gary Sinise Foundation.

“It really is speaking to the experience of the Afghanistan veteran and what they’re going through, the Gold Star families that are struggling with losing a loved one there, and then turning the country back over to the Taliban after 20 years of sacrifice,” Sinise said. “It’s very challenging, and it’s very similar to what happened to our Vietnam veterans when we pulled out of Vietnam after many years of sacrifice. Over 58,000 killed in action, many more wounded, and then the communists take over shortly after we pull out. This was different because the Taliban took over as we were pulling out. So, very difficult for the soldiers and service members who served there.

“I just have a message for all those people who served in Afghanistan,” Sinise continued. “Your service mattered. It made a difference to people there. It kept the terrorists from plotting and planning more attacks from the mountains and caves of Afghanistan. And I salute them and celebrate them.”

VA spending bill approved by House panel over Dems’ objections

By Svetlana Shkolnikova  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A House appropriations panel advanced a spending bill Wednesday for the Department of Veterans Affairs that Republicans touted as proof of their commitment to veterans but Democrats dismissed as an empty promise.

The House Appropriations Committee’s VA and military construction subcommittee agreed to move the legislation to the full committee over the loud objections of Democrats who say the Republican-led plan does not ful-

ly fund toxic exposure benefits.

Republicans, in turn, argued their bill supports fiscal responsibility while still meeting the Biden administration’s \$143 billion budget request for the VA for fiscal 2024, which begins Oct. 1.

“We kept our promise, and we did it responsibly,” said Rep. John Carter, R-Texas, chairman of the subpanel.

The bill is the latest showdown between House Republicans and Democrats over funding for veterans health care and benefits following the passage of a controversial measure last month to raise

the debt ceiling in exchange for slashing federal spending.

Democrats, the VA and veterans groups criticized the Republican proposal for failing to carve out protections for spending on veterans and said it would result in a 22% budget cut to the VA.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the top Democrat on the VA appropriations subcommittee, accused Republicans on Wednesday of continuing a “disturbing trend” of underfunding veteran services.

“I cannot in good conscience support this bill, and it saddens

me,” the Florida congresswoman said. “I’ve been in a leadership role on this subcommittee since 2014, and I have never felt more sickened and sad about the product that we are producing today.”

The main point of contention is the Toxic Exposures Fund, a dedicated reserve set up by last year’s sweeping Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics, or PACT, Act to cover the treatment costs of veterans exposed to burn pit smoke and other toxins. The fund is considered mandatory spending and is not subject to the annual congressional spending

process.

The Republican spending bill proposes putting \$5.5 billion into the fund — nearly \$15 billion less than the VA requested — and supplementing the difference with discretionary spending that can be adjusted annually.

Democrats said Wednesday that the move breaks the promise made to veterans under the PACT Act to guarantee health care and benefits and puts the fund at the mercy of future political fights.



NATION



NOAH BERGER/AP

D'Arcy Drollinger stands for a portrait outside Oasis nightclub Tuesday, in San Francisco.

# San Francisco is naming the nation's first drag laureate

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Anti-trans legislation is roiling the nation. Bills prohibiting drag performances are cropping up in statehouses. Violence and vitriol are turning children's drag story hour events into headline-news protests.

San Francisco is fighting back Thursday by naming the nation's first drag laureate, an ambassador-style position designed to represent the city's famous LGBTQ+ community at a time when rights are under attack.

In a city known for its support of LGBTQ+ rights, San Francisco Mayor London Breed says it was a natural step to create a position that not only embraces drag culture but puts government resources toward it. D'Arcy Drollinger, a well-known drag performer and nightclub owner, will receive a

\$55,000 stipend in her 18-month role as the city's inaugural drag laureate.

"My goals are to make San Francisco sparkle. I think drag performers bring a lot of sparkle and humor and glamor and silliness to the world. I think that is part of why drag is so successful," Drollinger said, adding that she expects to be in drag for the entirety of her role. "I'm going to be in drag pretty much 24/7 for the next 18 months."

She noted San Francisco's drag community is already politically engaged and active.

"There's a lot of power for the drag community in San Francisco," she said. "I feel very honored to be able to take that one more step."

West Hollywood is on the verge of appointing its own drag laureate later this month, though at a

much lower salary and with limited engagements. In New York, where the Stonewall riots marked a major turning point in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights, a 2021 effort to create such a position has languished in a committee, reflecting the challenges of creating such jobs even in liberal cities.

In San Francisco, Drollinger will inaugurate the role three weeks before Pride Month begins. Her duties will span from producing and participating in drag events to serving as a spokesperson for San Francisco's LGBTQ+ community to helping officials to ensuring the city's drag history is "shared, honored and preserved." The job posting sought someone who will "embody San Francisco's historic, diverse and inclusive drag culture, elevating the entire community on the national and international stage."

# IRS will test free e-filing system in '24

BY WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AND FATIMA HUSSEIN  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Most taxpayers are interested in filing their taxes directly to the IRS for free, a new report says, and that option will be tested next year.

The IRS has spent the past nine months studying whether U.S. taxpayers want to see a free, e-filing system run by the government — and is now preparing to launch a pilot program.

The prospect of a free, government-run, online tax filing system has been debated for a long time. Supporters argue that the option would make tax return services more equitable and accessible for taxpayers nationwide. But there's also been pushback from some big tax-prep companies.

Now, the IRS plans to launch a pilot program for the 2024 filing season to test a "direct file" system and help the federal government decide whether to move forward with potentially implementing it in the future, IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel and the Treasury's Chief Implementation Officer Laurel Blatchford said Tuesday.

There are still few details available about the pilot as the agency determines the basic structure, but Werfel said that members of the public will have the option to participate.

The IRS was tasked with looking into how to create a "direct

file" system as part of the funding it received from the Inflation Reduction Act, Democrats' flagship climate and health care measure that President Joe Biden signed last summer. It gave the IRS nine months and \$15 million to report on how such a program would be implemented.

The IRS published a feasibility report Tuesday laying out taxpayer interest in direct file, how the system could work, its potential cost, operational challenges and more.

The report shows that the majority of surveyed taxpayers would be interested in using an IRS-provided tool to prepare and file their taxes electronically — and that the IRS is "technically capable of delivering direct file, but doing so would require additional resources and add complexity to IRS operations," Werfel said on a call with reporters.

The IRS's existing free e-file option, available to lower-income taxpayers who qualify, will remain in place, he added. Individuals of all income levels can also still submit their returns for free via the mail — although it can take months to process paper returns and taxpayers still have to buy postage.

The new, direct e-file program being tested "could potentially save taxpayers billions of dollars annually," said Blatchford, who noted that an individual taxpayer pays an average of \$140 preparing their tax returns each year.

# Grand jury indicts man in 4 University of Idaho deaths

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — A grand jury has indicted a man who was already charged in the stabbing deaths of four University of Idaho students, allowing prosecutors to skip a planned week-long preliminary hearing that was set for late June.

Bryan Kohberger was arrested late last year and charged with burglary and four counts of first-degree murder in connection with the Nov. 13, 2022, killings of Xana Kernodle, Ethan Chapin, Madison Mogen and Kaylee Goncalves at a rental home near the University of Idaho campus. At the time, Kohberger was a graduate student

studying criminology at nearby Washington State University, and the killings left the close-knit communities of Moscow, Idaho, and Pullman, Wash., reeling.



Kohberger

A preliminary hearing — where prosecutors must show a judge that there is enough evidence to justify moving forward with felony charges — had been scheduled to begin June 26. But on Tuesday, a grand jury indicted Kohberger on the same criminal charges, effectively rerouting the

case directly to the state's felony court level and allowing prosecutors to skip the preliminary hearing process.

Court documents have already detailed much of the investigation that prosecutors say ties Kohberger to the slayings. A white sedan allegedly matching one owned by Kohberger was caught on surveillance footage repeatedly cruising past the rental home on a dead-end street around the time of the killings. Police say traces of DNA found on a knife sheath inside the home where the students were killed matches that of the 28-year-old Kohberger. Investigators also contend that a cellphone belong-

ing to Kohberger was near the victims' home on a dozen occasions prior to the killings, though it was apparently turned off around the time of the early-morning attack.

Kohberger was arrested Dec. 30, 2022, at his parents' home in eastern Pennsylvania, and law enforcement officials seized dark clothing, medical gloves, a flashlight and other items from the home, according to court documents. In Pullman, investigators seized stained bedding, strands of what appeared to be hair, and a single glove from his WSU campus apartment, according to another search warrant.

Still, the unsealed court docu-

ments do not appear to suggest a motive, nor whether the killer had specifically targeted any of the victims. It's also not clear if prosecutors believe Kohberger had met any of the victims before the night they died.

Kernodle, Chapin, Mogen and Goncalves were friends and members of the university's Greek system, and the three women lived together in the rental home just across the street from campus. Chapin — Kernodle's boyfriend — was there visiting on the night of the attack. The killings left many of their classmates and residents of Moscow reeling with grief and fear.



## NATION

# Virginia wary as SC gets closer to abortion ban

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va.— South Carolina became the latest state to move toward a near total abortion ban Wednesday with legislation that if enacted would leave Virginia an outlier in the South as a place where women have unrestricted access to abortions amid a rapid rise in restrictions in the year since Roe v. Wade was overturned.

South Carolina is among the last bastions in the region for those seeking legal abortions, but that status could end soon. Access would be almost entirely banned after about six weeks of pregnancy — often before women know they're pregnant — under the bill that now must pass the state Senate, which previously rejected a proposal to nearly outlaw abortions but could give final passage to the new legislation next week.

And most abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy will be banned in North Carolina beginning July 1 after the state's Republican-controlled Legislature successfully overrode the Democratic governor's veto late Tuesday.

Abortion is banned or severely restricted in much of the South, including bans throughout pregnancy in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas and

West Virginia. In Georgia, it's allowed only in the first six weeks.

Such restrictions are possible because the U.S. Supreme Court last year struck down the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, which established a nationwide right to abortion.

"It would be just devastating for abortion access in the South," Jamie Lockhart, executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia, said of the proposed six-week ban in South Carolina, the 12-week ban in North Carolina, and a six-week ban in Florida that will take effect only if the state's current 15-week ban is upheld by the state Supreme Court.

But North Carolina Rep. Sarah Stevens, a Republican, said she sees the 12-week ban and other restrictions in North Carolina's new law as "safeguards," not obstacles to abortion.

"We seek to balance protecting unborn babies while ensuring the safety of mothers," she said Tuesday.

Stricter bans across the South would heighten Virginia's role as an access point and create a "ripple effect" as people travel from out of state to seek care, Lockhart said.

"Despite abortion providers' efforts to increase available ap-

pointments and expand access for patients through telemedicine, the dramatic influx in out-of-state patients will lead to longer wait times for people in those access states," Lockhart said.

Virginia currently allows abortions in the first and second trimesters. An abortion is allowed in the third trimester only if three doctors certify the mother's mental or physical health is at serious risk.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, pushed for a 15-week ban during this year's legislative session, but that was defeated by the narrow Democratic majority in the state Senate.

Victoria Cobb, president of the conservative Family Foundation of Virginia, said Wednesday that the state's laws became out of step with its neighbors' during years of "liberal influence."

Virginians "are going to have to work to protect our Commonwealth from being exploited by the abortion industry," Cobb said.

The costs of travel for women who need to go outside their home states for abortions can quickly pile up, said Ashlyn Preaux, who helps run an abortion fund in South Carolina. Her organization helps patients pay for abortion care as well as gas cards and sometimes plane tickets.



JEFFREY COLLINS/AP

**South Carolina House Speaker Murrell Smith presides over the House as it restarted its debate on an abortion bill Wednesday in Columbia, S.C.**

If South Carolina enacts new restrictions, she expects to help send more patients to Virginia and Washington, D.C.

"All of these things add up and it's just not anything that people are prepared for," Preaux said. "It's not really treated at all like it's a health care issue."

The South Carolina House vote capped nearly 24 hours of grueling debate split across two days as the Republican supermajority tossed or defeated over 900 Democratic amendments. Lawmakers paused for roughly eight hours early Wednesday only after a computer glitch.

Democrats repeatedly spoke for all three minutes allotted per amendment. One would have required that residents read "The Handmaid's Tale." Another sought to make the state cover funeral costs for anyone who dies

upon being denied an abortion.

Republican Rep. John McCravy urged colleagues to support "the only path forward to prevent our state from becoming an abortion destination state in the Southeast."

Attention now turns to the Senate. Lawmakers could accept the House changes and send the measure to the governor who has indicated he would sign it. Or they could put the bill to a conference committee, where members from each chamber would have to work out their differences.

Until then, abortion remains legal through 22 weeks in South Carolina, and the state had already seen an increasing number of out-of-state patients before Florida and North Carolina enacted new restrictions. Farther west, women often travel to Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico or Colorado.

## DeSantis signs bills aimed at transgender care, pronouns, drag

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed bills Wednesday that ban gender-affirming care for minors, target drag shows, restrict discussion of personal pronouns in schools and force people to use certain bathrooms.

DeSantis has made anti-LGBTQ+ legislation a large part of his agenda as he prepares to seek the Republican presidential nomination. He signed the bills in front of a cheering crowd at the evangelical Cambridge Christian School in Tampa. The ceremony had a campaign-like feel, with DeSantis tossing Sharpies to a crowd, as opposed to when he privately signed measures on abortion and gun rights.

Democrats opposed the bills, and LGBTQ+ rallies were held at the Capitol during the session that ended two weeks ago. But Republicans have a supermajority in both chambers and easily approved the bills for DeSantis' signature.

"It's kind of sad that we even have some of these discussions,"



WILFREDO LEE/AP

**Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis throws markers into the audience after signing various bills during a ceremony at the Coastal Community Church at Lighthouse Point on Tuesday in Lighthouse Point, Fla.**

DeSantis told the crowd, standing behind a lectern with a sign reading "Let Kids Be Kids."

DeSantis presented a narrative that expert panels in the nation's major medical associations have said is false, such as the idea that children are routinely being "mutilated." While he said he is pro-

tecting parents' rights, his opponents say he is denying the rights of parents with transgender kids.

"They have cloaked themselves in being the party of less government and parental rights, and what we're seeing now is the total opposite," said Democratic state Sen. Shevrin Jones, who is gay. "Every

other parent has the right to raise their child the way that they want to as long as your child is not gay, trans, bisexual. That's freedom for some parents, but not for all parents."

The gender care law also bans the use of state money for gender-affirming care and places new restrictions on adults seeking treatment.

Three Florida parents have asked a federal court to issue a temporary restraining order immediately blocking the new law's enforcement. Attorneys for the families, who have a pending challenge to the state Boards of Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine, will be in court on Friday to argue that their children should be able to receive medical care as the case continues. The families are represented by Southern Legal Counsel, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Human Rights Campaign.

Planned Parenthood immediately started canceling gender-affirming care appointments after the bill was signed as the organiza-

tion assesses the law's implications.

Transgender medical treatment for children and teenagers is increasingly under attack in many states and it has lately been subject to restrictions or outright bans. But it has been available in the United States for more than a decade and is endorsed by major medical associations as appropriate care for people diagnosed with gender dysphoria. Their guidelines generally prevent surgery for minors.

Treatment typically begins with an evaluation for the distress caused when gender identity doesn't match a person's assigned sex. With parental consent, persistent dysphoria can be treated with hormones, but typically not until age 16. The guidelines also say surgery should be reserved for people 18 and older.

The gender-affirming care ban and the law targeting drag shows go into effect immediately. The bathroom restrictions and the law banning schools from forcing children to "provide his or her preferred personal title or pronouns" take effect July 1.



NATION

# Rule targets low-performing college programs

By COLLIN BINKLEY  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — College programs that leave graduates underpaid or buried in loans would be cut off from federal money under a proposal issued Wednesday by the Biden administration, but the rules would apply only to for-profit colleges and a tiny fraction of programs at traditional universities.

The Education Department is calling it a significant step toward accountability for the nation's colleges. With more students questioning the value of a degree, the measure aims to weed out low-performing programs and assure students the cost of tuition will pay off in the long run.

"Investing in a college degree or career certificate is supposed to pay off — instead, too many students are getting ripped off every single year," Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said in a call with reporters.

Opponents, however, say the scope is too narrow to help most students.

Known as gainful employment, it revives an Obama-era policy that was dismantled by the Trump administration before it took full effect. It was enacted amid a federal crackdown on for-profit colleges that contributed to the closure of several chains accused of fraud, including Corinthian Colleges and ITT Technical Institute.

Like the Obama rule, the new proposal would apply to all programs at for-profit colleges, but only to certificate programs at traditional universities. Opponents say it creates a double standard, with the potential to kill off hundreds of programs at for-profit colleges while leaving other programs unscathed even if they leave students buried in debt.

"The rule unfairly targets programs at proprietary institutions and fails to account for the unique challenges facing students and communities that career-oriented programs serve," said Jason Altmore, president and CEO of Career Education Colleges and Universities, an industry trade group.

The proposal could take effect no

sooner than July 2024. The federal government must first collect and review public comment. It's sure to draw outrage from Republicans in Congress, who have called the policy an attack on the entire for-profit college industry.

The proposal would put college programs through two tests to determine whether they're serving students well.

The first test would check whether a program's graduates carry heavy student debt compared to their earnings. Programs would pass if their graduates have annual loan payments averaging no more than 8% of their total income, or 20% of their discretionary income.

A second test would check wheth-

er at least half of a program's graduates earn more than working adults in their state with only a high school diploma.

Programs that fail at least one test would need to warn students that they're at risk of losing federal money. Those that fail the same test twice in any three-year period would be cut off from federal aid. That amounts to a death sentence for most programs, especially at for-profit colleges that rely heavily on students who use federal financial aid to pay for tuition.

The Education Department says the rule would help an estimated 700,000 students who would otherwise enroll at one of nearly 1,800 low-performing colleges.

## Twitter's purge of inactive accounts is drawing backlash

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Emily Reed lost her younger sister Jessica more than 10 years ago. For much of the last decade, she's visited Jessica's Twitter page to help "keep her memory alive."

Twitter became one of the places where Emily processed her grief and reconnected with a sister she describes as almost like a twin. But Jessica's account is now gone.

Last week, owner Elon Musk announced Twitter would be purging accounts that have had no activity for several years. That decision has been met by an outcry from those who have lost, or who fear losing the thoughts and words of deceased loved ones linked to now-inactive accounts.

Reed immediately returned to Jessica's page as she had done a day or two earlier after learning of the purge. In place of Jessica's page was an "account suspended" message that suggested it may be in violation Twitter rules.

Reed's tweet recounting her shock over the loss of the account has received tens of thousands of responses. Others shared similar experiences of pain upon learning that the account of a deceased loved one had vanished.

"Having these digital footprints ... is super important to me," Reed, 43, told The Associated Press.

The advent of social media has come with new way in which people mourn, returning to the place where they connected with friends and family in the past. In addition to memories and physical traces left behind, snippets of lives are now being captured in the digital space.

It is something that social media

platforms have wrestled with for recent years.

Twitter backed off an attempt to purge inactive accounts in 2019, years before Musk arrived, due to a similar backlash.

Other social media sites have found ways to allow people to mourn those they've lost.

Facebook and Instagram allow users to request an account be deactivated, or a memorialization of the account. Memorialized accounts show the word "Remembering" next to the person's name.

"In this modern age, we have these electronic reminders of people — (including) little snippets of a thought they had on a particular day or pictures that they shared," said Shira Gabriel, professor of psychology at University at Buffalo. Looking through a late loved one's social media can be both a healthy way to process grief and gather as a community in remembrance, Gabriel said.

The prospect of that resource disappearing "can bring about a sense of mourning again," Gabriel said. "There is a real psychological cost of getting rid of this digital thumbprint that was left behind and this ability for community members to gather in one spot."

It is unknown if Musk will backtrack on the decision to purge. The billionaire CEO of Tesla has launched policies that have rattled users and advertisers alike and shown little interest in amending those policies in response.

Musk named a new CEO last week, Linda Yaccarino, a former NBCUniversal advertising executive, who will have her hands full with a platform seemingly now in a perpetual state of chaos.

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NATION

# TikTok claims Montana ban violates rights

## New measure set to take effect Jan. 1, expected to be challenged

AMY BETH HANSON  
AND HALELUYA HADERO  
Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — Montana became the first state in the U.S. to enact a complete ban on TikTok on Wednesday when Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signed a measure that's more sweeping than any other state's attempts to curtail the social media app, which is owned by a Chinese tech company.

The measure, scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1, 2024, is expected to be challenged legally and will serve as a testing ground for the TikTok-free America that many national lawmakers have envisioned. Cybersecurity experts say it could be difficult to enforce the ban.

TikTok spokesperson Brooke Oberwetter argued that the law infringes on people's First Amendment rights and is unlawful. She declined to say whether the company will file a lawsuit.

The American Civil Liberties of Montana and NetChoice, a trade group that counts Google and TikTok as its members, also called the law unconstitutional. Keegan Medrano, policy director for the ACLU of Montana, said the Legislature "trampled on the free speech of hundreds of thousands of Montanans who use the app to express themselves, gather information and run their small business, in the name of anti-Chinese sentiment."

Some lawmakers, the FBI and officials at other agencies are concerned the video-sharing app, owned by ByteDance, could be used to allow the Chinese government to access information on U.S. citizens or push pro-Beijing misinformation that could influence the public. TikTok says none of this has ever happened.

A former executive at ByteDance alleges the tech giant has served as a "propaganda tool" for the Chinese government, a claim ByteDance says is baseless.

When Montana banned the app on government-owned devices in late December, Gianforte said TikTok posed a "significant risk" to sensitive state data. More than

half of U.S. states and the federal government have a similar ban.

On Wednesday, Gianforte also announced he was prohibiting the use of all social media applications tied to foreign adversaries on state equipment and for state businesses in Montana effective on June 1. Among the apps he listed are WeChat, whose parent company is headquartered in China; and Telegram Messenger, which was founded in Russia.

The legislation, drafted by the attorney general's office, easily passed through Montana's GOP-controlled Legislature.

Gianforte had wanted to expand the TikTok bill to include apps tied to foreign adversaries, but lawmakers did not send him the bill until after the session ended this month, preventing him from offering any amendments.

Montana's new law prohibits downloads of TikTok in the state and would fine any "entity" — an app store or TikTok — \$10,000 per day for each time someone "is offered the ability" to access the social media platform or download the app. The penalties would not apply to users.

Opponents say Montana residents could easily circumvent the ban by using a virtual private network, a service that shields internet users by encrypting their data traffic, preventing others from observing their web browsing. Montana state officials say geofencing technology is used with online sports gambling apps, which are deactivated in states where online gambling is illegal.

Though many lawmakers in Montana have been enthusiastic about a ban, experts who followed the bill closely said the state will likely have to defend the legislation in court.

Officials are also bound to receive criticism from advocacy groups and TikTok users who don't want their favorite app to be taken away. The app's fun, goofy videos and ease of use has made it immensely popular, and U.S. tech giants like Snapchat and Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, see it as a competitive threat.



A protester identified as "Reagan" holds a sign outside the Star Garden Topless Dive Bar in 2022 in North Hollywood, Calif.

## Dancers at LA bar to become only unionized strippers in US

Associated Press  
NEW YORK — Dancers at a Los Angeles bar could soon become the only unionized group of strippers in the U.S.

The Actors' Equity Association labor union says owners of the Star Garden Topless Dive Bar in North Hollywood have withdrawn their opposition and agreed to recognize the strippers' union.

For 15 months, dancers at the club have sought safer workplace conditions, better pay and health insurance, among other benefits. But their unionization drive was stalled by objections and legal challenges from the club's man-

agement.  
The union announced this week that management had agreed to a settlement. A formal vote count by the National Labor Relations Board has been set for Thursday.

"We're hoping what we've done to unionize this club will have laid the groundwork for any other stripper in the country who decides that they want to also have a voice in the way their workplace is run," Lilith, a dancer at Star Garden, told The Associated Press. Lilith asked not to be identified by her legal name in this article, due to fears of being harassed or stalked. The AP is aware of her le-

gal name.  
After being certified, the Star Garden dancers will join Actors' Equity, a union representing more than 51,000 workers in the entertainment industry nationwide.

The Star Garden case is not the first time strippers in the U.S. have sought union recognition. In the late 90s, dancers at San Francisco's Lusty Lady organized the Exotic Dancers Union. But that club was shuttered in 2013 — so, if Thursday's results are certified by the NLRB as expected, the Star Garden dancers will become the country's only existing unionized strippers.

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WORLD

# Crews seek to aid regions in Italy isolated by floods

By LUCA BRUNO  
*Associated Press*

FAENZA, Italy — Rescue crews worked Thursday to reach towns and villages in northern Italy that were cut off from highways, electricity and cellphone service following heavy rains and flooding, as farmers warned of “incalculable” losses and authorities began mapping out cleanup and reconstruction plans.

The death toll from rains that pushed two dozen rivers and tributaries over their banks stood at nine, with some people still unaccounted for, said Stefano Bonaccini, president of the hardest hit northern region of Emilia-Romagna.

Local mayors warned that some remote villages were still completely isolated because landslides had made roads impassable and phone service remained severed. That has prevented rescue teams from reaching residents and authorities from understanding the full scope of their needs, said Mercato Seraceno Mayor Monica Ros-

si. “If it rains any more, the situation will be tragic,” Rossi warned on Sky TG24, standing on a road with a chunk missing from a landslide.

By Thursday morning, some parts of the city of Faenza were still underwater, with cars submerged and basements swamped by thick, gooey mud. One family standing on their balcony said they didn’t have electricity, gas or food. Other residents took shelter at a local gymnasium, where soldiers set up cots on the basketball court for new arrivals.

“At some point they told us all to leave the area, and about one hour later we heard a loud boom,” 29-year-old Faenza resident Claudia said Thursday, recalling the moment early Wednesday that the nearby Lamone River burst its banks. “The water just flooded all over.”

More than 10,000 people fled their homes, some plucked from rooftops or balconies by rescue helicopters and others ferried out on dinghies. One family with a 20-day-



LUCA BRUNO/AP

**A man removes water from his flooded home in Castel Bolognese, Italy, on Thursday. Exceptional rains Wednesday in northern Italy swelled rivers over their banks, killing at least nine people.**

old baby was rescued Thursday morning, said Cesena Mayor Enzo Lattuca. Another packed their belongings into an inflatable pool that they floated down the thigh-high river of mud that was previously a street.

The drought-parched region had already estimated some 1 billion euros in losses from heavy rains earlier this month, but Bonaccini said the losses now reached multiple billions given the widespread damage to farmland, storefronts and infrastructure.

Italian farm lobby Coldiretti said more than 5,000 farms with greenhouses, nurseries and stables had been flooded, covering thousands of acres of vineyards, fruit groves, vegetables farms and grain fields. It said damage estimates were “incalculable,” because not only current harvests but future ones could be affected, given the permanent damage to roots from the “suffocating” mud of the runoff.

Bonaccini has called for the national government to declare a state of emergency, something that is

likely when the Cabinet meets next week following Premier Giorgia Meloni’s return from the Group of Seven summit in Japan. Already, the region has said it is looking to reconstruction efforts and restoration of vital infrastructure.

“It will take gigantic work” to recover, Bonaccini told a daily briefing.

Italy wasn’t alone in coping with heavy rainfall, as parts of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia also reported flooding and landslides that required evacuations.

## Turkish candidate hardens stance before runoff vote against Erdogan

*Associated Press*

ANKARA, Turkey — President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s main challenger in Turkey’s presidential race shifted gear and adopted a more nationalist and hard-line stance on Thursday, vowing to send back millions of refugees if he is elected and rejecting any possibility of negotiating for peace with Kurdish militants.

Voters in Turkey will head back to the polls on May 28 for a runoff election after neither Erdogan nor his rival, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, won more than 50% of the votes in Sunday’s first round.

The election will decide whether the country remains under the increasingly authoritarian president for a third decade, or can embark on a more democratic course that the opposition has promised to deliver.

Erdogan had faced electoral headwinds because of the cost-of-living crisis and criticism over the government’s response to a devastating earthquake in February. But with his alliance retaining its hold on the parliament, he is now in a good position to win in the second round.

Kilicdaroglu, the soft-mannered joint candidate of a six-party opposi-

tion alliance, had led a highly positive and uniting campaign, mostly on promises to reverse crackdowns on free speech and other forms of democratic backsliding. He had also campaigned on a pledge to repair an economy battered by high inflation and currency devaluation.

Many of the rallies of his pro-secular main opposition party, Republican People’s Party, or CHP, had ended with Kilicdaroglu making a heart shape with his hands. This week, however, the 74-year-old politician hardened his rhetoric in an apparent effort to appeal to nationalist voters, including those who voted for a third candidate, nationalist politician Sinan Ogan. Ogan has said he would consider sending migrants back by force if necessary.

“Erdogan! You did not protect the borders or the honor of the country. You brought in more than 10 million refugees,” Kilicdaroglu said in an address at his party’s headquarters. “You have turned your own citizens

into refugees. I declare that as soon as I come to power, I will send all refugees back home. Period.”

Amid rising anti-migrant sentiment in the country, Kilicdaroglu had previously said he intended to repatriate refugees within two years by creating favorable conditions for their return. Turkey is ranked as the country hosting the largest number of refugees, including at least 3.7 million Syrians.

The CHP leader also hit back at Erdogan, who had portrayed Kilicdaroglu as colluding with “terrorists” after he received the backing of the country’s pro-Kurdish party.

“Weren’t you the one who was sitting at the table with terrorist organizations, making secret bargains with terrorist organizations behind closed doors? I declare to all of my citizens that I have never sat down with terrorist organizations, and I will never do. Period,” Kilicdaroglu said.

He was referring to peace efforts between Erdogan’s government and the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which collapsed in 2015. The PKK is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union.



Kilicdaroglu

## Deutsche Bank to pay \$75M to settle Epstein-related suit

*Associated Press*

LONDON — Deutsche Bank has agreed to pay \$75 million to settle a lawsuit claiming that the German lender should have seen evidence of sex trafficking by Jeffrey Epstein when he was a client, according to lawyers for women who say they were abused by the late financier.

A woman only identified as Jane Doe sued the bank in federal district court in New York and sought class-action status to represent other victims of Epstein. The lawsuit asserted that the bank knowingly benefited from Epstein’s sex trafficking and “chose profit over following the law” to earn millions of dollars from the businessman.

One of the law firms representing women in the case, Edwards Pottenger, said it believed it is the largest sex trafficking settlement with a bank in U.S. history.

“The settlement will allow dozens of survivors of Jeffrey Epstein to finally attempt to restore their faith in our system knowing that all individuals and entities who facilitated Epstein’s sex-trafficking operation will finally be held accountable,” the firm said in statement.

Deutsche Bank would not comment on the settlement Thursday

but noted a 2020 statement from the bank acknowledging its mistake in taking on Epstein as a client, said Frank Hartmann, the German lender’s global head of media relations.

“The Bank has invested more than 4 billion euros (\$4.3 billion) to bolster controls, processes and training, and hired more people to fight financial crime,” Hartmann said in a written statement.

Deutsche Bank had previously joined JPMorgan Chase, which is also facing a lawsuit over its ties to Epstein, in fighting the allegations. Epstein killed himself in prison while facing federal criminal charges of sexually abusing dozens of underage girls.

The lawsuits — which also target the government of the U.S. Virgin Islands, where Epstein had an estate — are drawing in some high-profile figures.

A U.S. judge decided last month that JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon must face up to two days of questioning by lawyers handling the lawsuits.

JPMorgan has denied the allegations and in turn has sued former executive Jes Staley, saying he hid Epstein’s abuse and trafficking to keep the financier as a client.



# MOVIES

# Steering a franchise safely home

Director Leterrier discusses the experience of helming the last 2 'Fast & Furious' films



UNIVERSAL PICTURES/AP

**Vin Diesel returns as franchise star and producer in "Fast X." In the film, Dominic Toretto (Diesel) scrambles to protect his extended family of loved ones and friends when a new madman, Dante (Jason Momoa) materializes from the past seeking vengeance.**

BY JEN YAMATO  
*Los Angeles Times*

One year ago, Louis Leterrier was in Los Angeles finishing a project when he received the late-night call that would change his fate. Surely it was a mistake, he thought. Had the head of Universal accidentally butt-dialed him?

It was Peter Cramer, the studio's president, and he was calling with a script and an urgent request for a meeting at 6 a.m. the next day. Leterrier didn't bother sleeping, reading it over twice. Within days, the French filmmaker was on a last-minute flight to London, buckling up for the craziest ride of his career: taking over as director on Universal's mega summer sequel "Fast X."

The blockbuster was a week into production and locked into a release date when the sudden exit of longtime helmer Justin Lin, who had directed five of the previous nine films including 2021's "F9," threw Universal's \$6 billion "Fast and Furious" franchise into chaos. The mad dash for a new director happened so fast that the opportunity was overwhelming, Leterrier said.

But he loved the "Fast" films. He'd been up for directing earlier installments. It was his dream to direct a "Fast" movie, his wife reminded him as he sped through a series of high-level interviews before franchise star and producer Vin Diesel officially awarded him the job.

"I've seen all the movies. I really was a fan," he told the L.A. Times ahead of the film's May 19 premiere. "And it was the one that got away."

Leterrier's eclectic career made him an ideal candidate. He'd made his debut with the 2002 actioner "The Transporter," directed the Jet Li film "Unleashed" and worked on the fantasy epic "Clash of the Titans." He helmed the magician ensemble "Now You See Me" and even took a detour into puppetry with the acclaimed Net-

flix series "The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance."

And he had maintained good relationships with Universal after directing 2008 Marvel outing "The Incredible Hulk," which landed him on the short list to replace Lin.

"He knew a lot of the actors already. He understands action. He's done visual effects. He's done drama," Cramer said. "He really was the perfect guy to step in at a moment's notice and take over, which is what he did."

Billed as the beginning of the end for one of Hollywood's biggest, most lasting franchises, "Fast X" finds Dominic Toretto (Diesel) scrambling to protect his extended family of loved ones and friends when a new madman, Dante (Jason Momoa), materializes from the past seeking vengeance.

The first in a two-part story that takes place in Rome, London, Turin, Portugal and Los Angeles, its ensemble includes core Toretto crew Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), Mia (Jordana Brewster), Han (Sung Kang), Roman (Tyrese Gibson), Tej (Chris "Ludacris" Bridges) and Ramsey (Nathalie Emmanuel); Dom's recently un-estranged brother Jakob (John Cena); ex-enemy Deckard Shaw

(Jason Statham); former big bad Cipher (Charlize Theron); and newcomers Tess (Brie Larson), Abuela Toretto (Rita Moreno) and Aimes (Alan Ritchson). Lin, who remains a producer, is credited with the screenplay alongside Dan Mazeau.

The franchise may have begun humbly as the brooding bromantic saga of DVD player-stealing L.A. street racers, but it has swelled to increasingly bombastic heights. Cars have fought planes, helicopters and submarines, skydived and, yes, even launched into space. Characters have suffered amnesia, returned from the dead and unearthed previously unknown siblings over the course of 10 feature films, including the Statham-Dwayne Johnson spinoff "Hobbs & Shaw."

But for all its onscreen antics and soap-opera twists, the "Fast" films have an undeniable pull with audiences, says Leterrier, who has been geeking out over their action sequences for years and remembers the excitement he and Statham felt when they went to see the 2001 original in France while filming "The Transporter."

"They're the ne plus ultra of action filmmaking. The 'Fast and Furious' set pieces are always amazing because they have three acts within it — there's a beginning, a middle and [an] end, and you never lose the characters within the action," he says. "Then Jason got the job and became Shaw, and I was very jealous."

Stepping into the director's chair, he worked on re-writes on the plane ride to London and hit the ground running, inheriting the prep and crew Lin had in place, including series cinematographer Stephen F. Windon, production designer Jan Roelfs, editors Dylan Highsmith and Kelly Matsumoto, costume designer Sanja Milkovic Hays and composer Brian Tyler.

**SEE FAST ON PAGE 15**



MONICA SCHIPPER, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

**Director Louis Leterrier says directing a movie in the "Fast" franchise has been a longtime dream of his.**



## MOVIES

# Fast: Cast says Leterrier quickly earned their trust

FROM PAGE 14

Already friends with Lin through the commercials production collective they share with fellow filmmakers such as the Russo brothers, he spoke briefly with his “Fast” predecessor by phone.

“He said, ‘You’re so lucky. Best guys, best crew. Good luck,’” Leterrier says. “And then I was in the midst of it, into a tunnel of work.”

Lin’s fingerprints are still all over “Fast X”: A retconned revisitation of Lin’s “Fast Five” vault sequence serves as an opening showcase in “Fast X,” blending new and original footage.

But many of the ideas Leterrier pitched to get the job made their way into the final version of the film, informed by his fanatic knowledge of the characters, themes and motifs that have endeared the franchise to a loyal global audience.

“I wanted to go back to cars — that was actually very important to me,” Leterrier said. “Let’s do a real race in the middle of the movie, put Dom behind the wheel and have the bad guy be a driver.”

An important first step was connecting with actors left adrift by Lin’s departure even as production rolled on.

Rodriguez, who’s played Letty for 23 years, described the tumult, which forced her and Theron to film a bruising fight sequence without a director.

“You’re ready to shoot the thing, you don’t have a finished third act and your director just quit. Welcome to the heartache,” she said. “There’s tears, because you don’t want things to end up wack because people are rushing things or they’re worried about money so they forget the integrity of the thing. You wonder, ‘Will they find someone who’s passionate enough to take this on and care enough?’” In Leterrier, she says, the cast found a collaborator who “opened the doors of creativity.”

“He saved us,” Rodriguez said. “He saved our ass.”

It’s not easy to be a “Fast” cast member — the roles require conveying precise emotion and character history in the span of short scenes, says Brewster, who originated the role of Mia in the first film and gets a rare action set piece of her own in “Fast X.” When things felt uncertain, she says, Leterrier earned the cast’s trust by trusting them to know their characters better than anyone.

“I think everyone was looking at us going, ‘Wow, the wheels are coming off’ — no pun intended — and Louis got us back on track,” Brewster said. “I assumed that someone who just took on this job would want to go under a rock, hide and prepare and not be bombarded by everyone’s suggestions. But he spoke to every single one of us and was like, ‘Tell me your ideas. Tell me what you don’t like about the script.’ He was so generous, and that set the tone. And I think that’s very rare for a director, to be that open and not to be precious.”

Making his own directorial debut between “F9” and “Fast X” on the upcoming “Shaky Shivers,” Kang brought insight



UNIVERSAL PICTURES/AP

Clockwise from left, Michelle Rodriguez, Sung Kang, Nathalie Emmanuel, Vin Diesel, Leo Abelo Perry, Rita Moreno, Jordana Brewster, Chris “Ludacris” Bridges and Tyrese Gibson appear in a scene from “Fast X.”

from that experience to his relationship with Leterrier.

“I learned that once people felt like I trusted them and valued their creative input and appreciated their presence on set, then they were going to give me the best version of themselves,” Kang said. “I just made an effort to go, ‘Louis, you’re the coach. There’s some drama that’s happened, but that has nothing to do with you and I, and I trust you as our new leader.’”

form his reverence for storytelling — and, as he sees it, the “Fast” films amount to “the greatest long format in history,” where the same actors have played the same characters for more than 20 years.

“Where I didn’t need to change anything, because it was perfect, I didn’t change anything. When I was like, ‘I think that can be enhanced or that will work better,’ I’d tweak,” he said.

An early scene he added makes a refer-

in previous films. Emotionally, “Fast X” unfolds in reverse, giving Dom ample opportunity to reflect.

“You start with the barbecue. You finish with the hard stuff. So you start with the good times and you can’t help but reminisce about your past, especially when you’re aging — that’s what I wanted to show,” Leterrier said. “Because we’re coming to the end, so what I’d love is for people to go back to the beginning and understand how this has all evolved.”

The decades of history that characters share with one another — and the history fans have with the films themselves — will become even more significant as the 10th installment builds to its grand finale, an 11th “Fast” film expected in 2025, which Leterrier is already signed on to direct.

Both studio and director expect the writers strike will slow progress on the final chapter, to be written by “Birds of Prey” scribe Christina Hodson and “The Lost City’s” Oren Uziel.

“The writers’ strike is something that’s on everybody’s mind,” Cramer said. “It depends on how long it goes, but obviously it will interrupt the writing process on the next ‘Fast’ movie.”

“If it lasts for too long, it’ll be hard to imagine that we can get this film up on the timeline we’d like to.”

But the end of the road, at least for the main film series, is already mapped out, Leterrier says — and if you pay close enough attention to “Fast X,” you’ll see seeds of what’s to come.

“We needed to understand where we’re ending in order to create the road to it,” he said. “So on top of everything that we had to do, we had to decide, ‘This is where this franchise is going to end. It has to end this way.’ Yes, yes, yes. Everybody agreed. Shook hands. And then we went back to work.”

## “He knew a lot of the actors already. He understands action. He’s done visual effects. He’s done drama. He really was the perfect guy to step in at a moment’s notice and take over, which is what he did.”

Peter Cramer

Universal Studios president

Leterrier credits his unflappability to being raised by parents in the French cinema.

“I grew up with actors, so one thing that doesn’t scare me is actors,” he says with a smile. The family’s Parisian kitchen played host to friends of his costume designer mother Catherine and filmmaker father François, who worked with Louis Malle and enjoyed an eclectic directing career of his own.

“Sophia Loren was there with Marcello Mastroianni and Lauren Bacall and Robert Altman. That was a regular day for me — crazy,” he says. “They were doing ‘Pret-a-Porter.’ Elia Kazan gave me his Stetson hat. He was like, ‘You’ll need this when you become a director.’”

Those childhood experiences also in-

ence only hardcore fans like him might clock; in it, Dom and Han reminisce over their glory days pulling heists in the Dominican Republic and shout out the 2009 “Fast and Furious” short film, “Los Bandoleros.”

“I could line up a hundred ‘Fast’ fans and maybe 10% would know that film and the references,” said Kang, who appeared alongside Diesel and Rodriguez in the direct-to-video piece, written and directed by Diesel, which connects the events of the first two films with the fourth film, “Fast & Furious.” “This man has really studied the mythology.”

The idea sprang from hourslong conversations Leterrier had with Diesel at the end of each day on set, talking about lore, characters and the filming of big moments



## VIDEO GAMES

# Building a sense of satisfaction

Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom gives players creative license, adds to series' lore

By GENE PARK

*The Washington Post*

I built a cart out of wood, wheels and portable fans to navigate a complex rail system and ferry the hero Link across an endless pit. It was like engineering a roller coaster with cardboard, duct tape and a prayer. It took me 45 minutes of failed inventions and a gradual understanding of the physics before I succeeded. When Link safely made it across, I cheered and proclaimed myself a genius. I felt like a NASA engineer celebrating a Mars landing. I create, therefore I progress.

In a modern media landscape dominated by the “creators,” people communicating their ideas and desires in unique, singular methods, The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom fuses that philosophy of self-expression with the series' classic formula. This is a game that encourages players to build their own solutions.

I overcame almost every challenge by devising some weird concoction of gears and tools. Sometimes a complex puzzle was solved with a simple solution. There were many times where my answer to a challenge was, “I’ll just build a really, really long bridge,” and it almost always worked.

The experience is dense with the sense of accomplishment. Almost every puzzle gave me self-satisfaction and pride in how I tackled it.

Tears of the Kingdom is a miracle of engineering and elegant artifice, especially since it runs on aging, decade-old technology inside the Nintendo Switch. It unlocks parts of your creativity, forcing you to use elementary knowledge of physics and chemistry to overcome challenges. Minecraft revolutionized gaming by introducing deep creative elements, but Tears combines them with the luxurious animations and polish of a complex narrative adventure. Prior to its release May 12, the game was leaked to many players, and the inventions they created defy anything you’d expect from a Zelda game. One video clip shows Link fending off hordes of monsters by building a giant robot armed with a seesawing, fire-breathing, dragon-shaped penis.

Since the solutions to these

puzzles require understanding real-life concepts such as weight distribution and momentum, Tears could be a game family and friends solve together. My girlfriend was instrumental in helping me solve several puzzles, and we both felt a sense of ownership.

But longtime Zelda fans need immediate answers. Yes, classic temple design has returned. While each temple or dungeon follows the formula of the player finding and activating four or five switches, their set design as well as the means to navigate and solve them are unique to each region. In each temple, Link will find a companion with a unique skill that’s not only necessary to solve that temple, and both stay with him throughout the rest of the game. Although 2017’s Breath of the Wild gives you every tool needed to solve the game in its first hour, Tears reintroduces the traditional power creep. By the end of the game, you’ll be armed with abilities such as conjuring a gust of wind to glide faster, or triggering a rolling attack to remove brittle walls and rocks to unveil secrets.

Each temple also comes with a warm-up adventure of sorts themed to that region, much like in Skyward Sword on the Wii. Approaching the Fire Temple requires an adventure in, under and around a volcano. One such quest involves climbing up in the sky so high, I was as terrified of Link punching through the atmosphere into space and plummeting to the ground.

The game is more than double the size of Breath. Islands, caves and dungeons dot the sky, while an underground region rests below the land of Hyrule — it’s a pitch-black network of caves and ancient ruins that’s also a dark mirror to the overworld. By the end of my 60-hour run through the main quest, I hadn’t even found half of the 199 side adventures available, let alone completed even a quarter of them. While Breath redefined what massive open-world games can be, it is relatively empty of scripted adventure. Not so with Tears, where seemingly every character in the world has purpose, whether it’s to add more context to a mystery or lead you to more adventure.

The most disappointing thing about Tears: It retains the Breath



Nintendo photos

**The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom is double the size of Breath of the Wild. Islands, caves and dungeons dot the sky, while an underground region rests below the land of Hyrule — it’s a pitch-black network of caves and ancient ruins that’s also a dark mirror to the overworld.**

of the Wild structure of having 150 puzzle shrines all over the map. Players can visit each of the four main regions and find triggers that show cinematic depictions of past events. While all of these details are significantly better, more detailed and more rewarding than in the last game, the experience won’t feel as fresh and revolutionary as it did in 2017. And the exemplary music the series is known for (galloping heroic themes inspired by classic Western film composers such as Elmer Bernstein of “The Magnificent Seven”) is nowhere to be found, as Tears instead opts for atmospheric piano tinkles in the overworld.

Tears doesn’t just retread stories and locations, though. Breath veterans will find new secrets and challenges in old, familiar places. Every visit to every location of note from the last game will contain something shocking, frightening or wondrous. Plus, completing many stories will change the world around you in meaningful ways, oftentimes beautifying or restoring the land.

It’s also important to know that unlike in Breath, the story of Tears isn’t mainly told through flashbacks. The residents and villains of Hyrule all take a direct, active role in your quests. In fact, it’s almost as if every speaking creature in the land has some role to play in the narrative, whether providing interesting new history or having their own character arcs. The side quests aren’t just “go here, fetch this.” Instead, they are full stories with complicated relationships and are often drenched with consequence. These side stories range from becoming a literal newspaper journalist to meddling in a small-town election. Some of these stories feed into the main questline, adding important context and oftentimes giving hints to solving the game’s largest



**Above, Tears of the Kingdom encourages players to build their own solutions to solve its complex puzzles and overcome challenges, like this boat, below, that Link makes using portable fans and logs.**



mysteries, including the location of the missing Princess Zelda.

Any concerns of retreaded content was forgotten when, after 50 hours, I began the game’s final act, the most thrilling, expansive and epic climax in the series. The little said the better, but if you’re a longtime fan of the series and its characters, it’s worth every second to push through to witness the final sequence of events and challenges. It will surprise, delight and plumb emotional depths the series has never before explored. Even the sleepy soundtrack wakes and begins to thunderously carry you to impending victory.

This is the fullest Zelda story to date, as it answers almost every nagging mystery from the last

game. Who were the ancient race of Zonai? Which version of the series villain Ganondorf is threatening the land now? How does any of this fit into the convoluted timeline of the last 19 Zelda games? The answers may not be what you expect, but they’re all here.

Ultimately, the lore isn’t the main attraction, and isn’t the reason the Zelda series has endured for almost half a century. What’s more compelling is the game’s nod to the collective story of how human imagination pushes us through our toughest challenges, and sometimes sends us soaring to heights unseen.

**Platform:** Nintendo Switch

**Online:** [zelda.com/tears-of-the-kingdom](https://zelda.com/tears-of-the-kingdom)



HEALTH & FITNESS

# Choosing to live under pressure

Researcher determined to live underwater for 100 days to complete his study of brain injuries

BY KYLE MELNICK  
*The Washington Post*

Every day, Joseph Dituri wakes up around 5 a.m., walks to his work station and basks in the sun that hovers above him.

This sun, however, is a yellow pillow with a smiling face in the center. Dituri hung it on his wall to remind him of the real sun, which he hasn't seen in more than 75 days.

Dituri, a hyperbaric medicine researcher and associate professor at the University of South Florida, has been living in an underwater pod in Key Largo, Fla., since March 1. He's exploring whether living underwater is possible through daily tests on his brain, heart, lungs and blood.

On May 13 — his 73rd day at Jules' Undersea Lodge — Dituri believes he broke the world record for the longest stint living underwater. But Dituri, 55, is still determined to live submerged for 100 days to complete his experiment.

"It's not about the world record," Dituri told *The Washington Post*. "It's about living underwater and in an isolated, confined, extreme environment. I have 100 days as the mark, but it's only because I couldn't afford to spend 200 days."

Dituri has long been fascinated with water. He grew up near the Atlantic Ocean on Long Island, N.Y., and served in the U.S. Navy for nearly 28 years before retiring as a commander in December 2012.

Around that time, Dituri was scuba diving near Orange County, Calif., when he said he saw an 11-inch sea lice.

He had believed all sea lice were only a few millimeters long. He wondered what other species he could discover in the sea.

Dituri knew living underwater was possible. In 2014, two Tennessee professors stayed in Jules' Undersea Lodge, an underwater hotel in Key Largo, for 73 days.

Since watching his military colleagues suffer concussions during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Dituri has studied treatments for traumatic brain injuries. He wondered whether living underwater in a pressurized environment could aid brain injuries.

"I said, 'We have to live in the ocean,'" Dituri said. "Everybody was like, 'You've gone crazy.' I was retired from the Navy, and they're like, 'That's it. You've lost it.'"

Dituri earned a Ph.D. in bio-

medical engineering from the University of South Florida in December 2017. In 2019, Dituri and four friends stayed at Jules' Undersea Lodge for five days to test underwater life. But Dituri wanted to be submerged longer, and by himself, to see how his brain and body would respond.

The coronavirus pandemic halted his plans to begin his experiment in 2020, but Dituri decided he would fund nearly half of the roughly \$200,000 project this year. The Marine Resources Development Foundation, a nonprofit in Key Largo, also helped fund the project, Dituri said.

Before Dituri went underwater, doctors recorded his vitals, including blood pressure, cholesterol, calcium levels, muscle inflammation and stem-cell health. He also underwent anxiety and depression exams with psychologists.

Dituri booked a 100-square-foot pod — similar to a 10-by-10-foot room — that rests 22 feet underwater. The lodge gets electricity, oxygen and water from a cord connected to land. Dituri also attached an Ethernet cable to a router on land for internet access. The pod has a small kitchen, toilet, shower and bedroom.

Every three days, Dituri said his research colleagues swim to his pod to deliver food, including eggs and salmon, in a pressurized container. But Dituri can only cook in a microwave because of the increased pressure in the sea.

Dituri still teaches his hyperbaric medicine and biomedical engineering classes virtually three days per week for the University of South Florida. He exercises with resistance bands and takes vitamin D supplements. But his main research has come from tests on his body. He frequently takes urine samples and has undergone electrograms, which record brain and heart activity.

Dituri meets virtually with psychologists and a psychiatrist to monitor his mental health. Dituri often leaves his pod for snorkeling, and he believes he recently discovered a new single-cell organism.

Dituri said that his cholesterol and stress have dropped, that he spends more of his rest in REM (Rapid Eye Movement) or deep sleep, and that he has produced stem cells at a faster rate. When he leaves the pod on June 9, Dituri will undergo extensive testing to see how his body reacted to the new environment.



BEN NORTON

Joseph Dituri often tests his blood, urine and saliva to see how living underwater is impacting his body.



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## MUSIC

## Q&amp;A



KEVIN KANE/TNS

From left, Emily Strayer, Natalie Maines and Martie Maguire of the Chicks perform at Northwell Health at Jones Beach Theater on July 2 in Wantagh, N.Y.

# Still not ready to make nice

## 20 years after country music canceled the Chicks, they have no regrets

BY MIKAEL WOOD  
*Los Angeles Times*

**W**hen the Chicks aren't working, the three members keep a group text going to stay in touch about band matters and about one another's families — and to trade jokes, “the more inappropriate the better,” says lead singer Natalie Maines.

If people could read what they write, the 48-year-old adds with a laugh, “we’d be canceled 10 times over already.”

This summer, the Grammy-winning pop-country trio — which also includes sisters Martie Maguire, 53, and Emily Strayer, 50 — are on the road, touring behind their most recent studio album, 2020's Jack Antonoff-produced “Gaslighter,” which addressed Maines' messy divorce from actor Adrian Pasdar in brutally specific songs set on her boat and at the Hollywood Bowl. (Though the Chicks formed in Dallas, these days Maines lives in Los Angeles, Maguire in Austin and Strayer in San Antonio.)

First on the itinerary: a six-night residency at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas earlier this month. It's a long way from the tiny bluegrass gigs the group — then known as the Dixie Chicks — started out playing before blowing up with 1998's “Wide Open Spaces” and its 1999 follow-up, “Fly,” both of which have sold more than 10 million copies; it wasn't long after that that the Chicks were famously booted from country radio after Maines told an

audience in England that they were ashamed to share a home state with President George W. Bush.

Between rehearsals at Planet Hollywood, the women gathered on Zoom to discuss the new show, their history of cancellation and the state of the Chicks' next LP.

**Los Angeles Times: Whose Vegas shows have you seen?**

**Maines:** I've seen Wayne Newton. I saw Siegfried & Roy. Tom Jones. I think Martie threw her bra at Tom Jones.

**Maguire:** That makes me sound really old.

**You're talking about the real Vegas OGs.**

**Strayer:** I think it's different for artists now. It used to be you'd come here toward the end of your career and stay until you went away. I don't know if I'd want to be here for months on end.

**Maguire:** Our mom's coming for five days. I told her she couldn't stay that long, and she was like, “I'll just read my book for my book club.”

**“Gaslighter” came out at the beginning of the pandemic — not exactly an opportune time to draw a bunch of attention. Do you think it got its due?**

**Maines:** Our fans love it. They know every word to that album at the shows. We got used to not being played on the radio and stuff like that a long time ago.

**Natalie, you really went into detail in the songs about the end of your marriage.**

**What's it been like to get some distance and look back at that?**

**Maines:** The thing that I always contemplate is that my kids have to live with this. I knew that when we wrote it and when we put it out. But as artists, that's what we do. It's part of the therapy and it's part of the survival. Kids are doing good, but ask me in 20 years. I might regret it.

**Maguire:** You know Natalie's son Slade is in the band? Sometimes I'll look over at him like, What's he thinking? He's played this album so many times. What a trouper.

**What do your other children think of the Chicks?**

**Maines:** My kids like our music. They're not like, “Oh, Mom's a dork.”

**Strayer:** My 18-year-old just informed me that it's not cool to listen to the radio. I guess we were ahead of the curve not being on there.

**Maguire:** Austin radio is cool. But yeah — keep San Antonio lame.

**How do the cities of Texas rank in terms of coolness?**

**Maines:** Austin's the coolest for sure.

**Strayer:** San Antonio's definitely the lamest, but that's why I like it.

**For years you've sung Fleetwood Mac's “Landslide,” which Stevie Nicks is on tour now performing as a tribute to the late Christine McVie. Are there Chicks songs whose meanings have changed for you over time?**

**Maguire:** “Cowboy Take Me Away” was written about Emily's ex-husband, and I

doubt any of us think about him during that song.

**Strayer:** “Gaslighter” we wrote more as a relationship song, but it definitely got very political very fast. It became the word of the year [in 2022].

**Maines:** I don't feel the same way singing “Not Ready to Make Nice” as before. I used to feel that s—, and for probably a lot longer than I should have. Now it's just a song.

**Strayer:** I almost feel like we've given that song to our fans. When they're singing it, you know they're singing about something they went through.

**You're taking Maren Morris out as an opening act this year. Did the fallout from her feud with Jason Aldean remind you of the blowback to your criticism of President Bush during the Iraq War?**

**Strayer:** I'm not familiar with what happened between the two of them.

**Maines:** Didn't his wife go on social media and start putting down trans people?

**She criticized the parents of kids seeking gender-affirming care.**

**Maines:** Just disgusting stuff. I love how outspoken Maren was on that. It's just another example of what's going on in this country on every level. Florida, Tennessee, Texas — it's just ridiculous. Whether it's abortion or gay rights — everybody has to have something to hate, somebody to put down.

**SEE CHICKS ON PAGE 19**



MUSIC

Goodbye, MTV News, as you will surely be missed

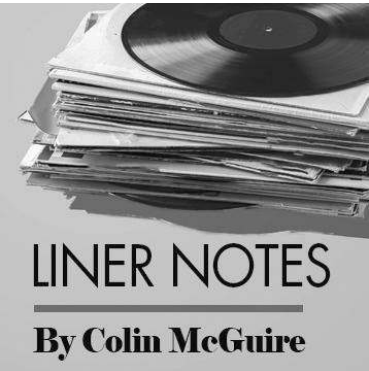
It was of a time and for a time. For those of us who are a very specific age — and I do mean *very* specific age — when you saw Kurt Loder’s face pop up in the middle of the day on MTV, you knew something important had happened. Loder’s profile was always serious, his face never smiling, and he had a voice that exuded authority. He wasn’t on the TV to tell us U2’s plane just touched down at the next tour stop. Instead, he came around to break some sad, serious stuff to us music fans.

And now that news will break in such a way no more. That’s because after about 36 years, MTV News is no more.

Last week, MTV’s parent company, Paramount Global, announced that it would shutter the MTV arm that at one time really, really mattered to some of us music nerds. To be fair, that “one time” was quite a bit ago. The announcement that MTV was officially sunseting its news division probably had many people responding, “Wait, MTV News is still a thing?”

But it’s true. Despite the glory days of “Unplugged,” “TRL,” “Live at the 10 Spot” and “120 Minutes” being long gone, MTV has still been truckin’ ahead. Sure, that might mean 562 episodes of something called “Ridiculousness” per year, and yeah, music videos hold about as much weight as an 8-track single in this modern day of fickle technology, but MTV hasn’t died quite yet. Perhaps the death of MTV News foreshadows something more ominous on that front, but that’s for another day. Currently, we pour one out for the network’s news division.

“The Week In Rock” was must-see TV from about 1987 to



1994. It was a half-hour of Loder, Tabitha Soren, Alison Stewart, SuChin Pak or even Gideon Yago taking us through the biggest music stories of the week and at the time, there was nothing else like it. Think about the way networks like Fox News or MSNBC present their nighttime television these days, remove the partisanship, add some Lollapalooza clips, stop being mean, and you’ll get the point. More so, when those breaking news alerts came ... man, if your heart didn’t drop, you didn’t have a pulse.

Who can forget the way the news of Kurt Cobain’s death was relayed on one of those MTV News breaks? Ditto for Tupac and Notorious B.I.G. And don’t even get me started on all the various degrees of Michael Jackson coverage. From Lisa Marie to Bubbles to Jackson’s actual musical output, that news staff had everything covered. They were there to glorify grunge and magnify Madonna. It predated an age when information on the music biz recalibrated itself by the retweet and it was the only televised source for such things. In its own way, it was revolutionary.

That’s why you can’t fault MTV for trying again when in 2016, it kind of/sort of attempted a reboot, dedicating itself to long-

form journalism in the digital age and even scooping up some Grantland alumni. As Spin fascinatingly chronicled in 2017, it simply wasn’t meant to work. To be MTV, you have to have fruitful relationships with the artists. To do worthwhile journalism, you can’t be afraid of offending the artists. As Jordan Sargent wrote for Spin, acts like Kings Of Leon and Chance The Rapper threatened to boycott MTV’s awards shows and end all ties with the outlet if unfavorable reviews were left published. The simple age of simple music news was no more and the bygone days of having authoritative voices being the Place To Go for music information was antiquated and not realistic.

But that doesn’t mean last week’s announcement doesn’t end a consequential era for some of us. Watching MTV News programming as a teenager, that was all I wanted to be when I grew up. How neat would it be to hang out with Pearl Jam backstage at some club in Seattle before Seattle became the center of the music universe? Or, shoot. Maybe even be a post-show correspondent at a Video Music Awards ceremony? It seemed like the coolest job in the world. Now, it doesn’t exist.

So, kudos to you, MTV News and all you provided for such a short period in musical history. Without you, Kurt Loder would have been just another Rolling Stone scribe and Gideon Yago would have been just another political correspondent. Some people only loved their MTV. Me? I loved my MTV News. And in the name of Tabitha Soren’s post-MTV photography career, I know I couldn’t have been the only one ... right?

Jonas Brothers

The Album (Republic Records)

If, like many of us, you got burned trying to get tickets to the Jonas Brothers’ recent tour, their latest work “The Album” is a sweet consolation to keep your mind off it.

The Jonas Brothers are all about love in their latest project. Married with kids, every lyric hides a nudge to their homes. And while their music is focused on that familiar tender feeling, the experimentation into new genres makes it more special and fresh.

From the get-go with the track “Miracle” we are introduced by a sexy groove with show-stopping high-pitched verses, while keeping that carefree vibe they are known for.

Even romantic ballads gain extra spice, such as “Vacation Eyes,” a track with great potential to be a first dance tune at weddings for the new generation. “I got vacation eyes, I’m gonna have them for the rest of my life.” The upbeat drums and the use of a chromatic harmonica elevate the song, making it more engaging and amusing — a jolification of your classic, slow love track.

The trio of Nick, Joe and Kevin released their single “Wings,” with “The White Lotus” actress and super fan Haley Lu Richardson leading in a music video that resembles a “get ready with me” tutorial from heaven. Followed by their second early released single “Waffle House,” which focuses on the brothers’ competitive dynamic that every sibling knows way too well. “Headstrong father and a determined mother. Oh, that’s why some nights we try to kill each other.”

In the lyrics, the brothers reveal that no matter what happens, everything will be figured out when we share a special ordinary moment with our loved ones. “Deep conversations at the waffle house,” they sing in the chorus.

On the topic of love and family, there’s an impossible-to-miss heartfelt acoustic melody about fatherhood and their baby girls, titled “Little Bird.”

The brothers, who broke hearts all over the world as they said, ‘I do,’ reflect about that bittersweet moment in the future when they will not be their girls’ No. 1 guy anymore.

“Cause I know if I’m doing my job correct / Nights like these will happen less / So please just keep me in your heart / When you fly into somebody else’s arms.”

Jonas Brothers’ “The Album” is a celebration of love in all its forms, perfect for people that see life through adoring rose-tinted glasses.

— Martina Rebecca Inchingolo  
Associated Press



Joy Oladokun

Proof of Life (Amigo/Verve Forecast/Republic)

Joy Oladokun draws on a range of influences, but trying to pin her down with labels is mostly a waste of time. Better simply to acknowledge her as one of the most appealing artists working in the music scene these days.

Oladokun, a Black lesbian singer-songwriter who lives in East Nashville and has been embraced by the Americana world, delivers her warmest and most cohesive work to date on “Proof of Life,” a 13-song album that creates an aura of positivity and sustains it. The comparison you hear most frequently with Oladokun is Tracy Chapman, and she doesn’t run from her as an influence. But that’s mostly a surface assessment, and there’s just not enough brooding here to keep Oladokun boxed in there long.

“Proof of Life” features unexpected collaborations that only enhance its label-defying vibe. Chris Stapleton joins her for “Sweet Symphony,” a pleasant if not wildly original match between two fine singers with a country spirit that fits them both. Rapper Maxo Kream offers lines to “Revolution” that add electricity without disturbing a gentle groove that lands a million miles from the revolution Chapman talked up — but doesn’t disown it, either.

Oladokun, she explains against yet another pulsating backbeat, is the revolution. In fact, “Proof of Life” might be most noteworthy for its deep sense of comfort in her own skin, coupled with the unmistakable signs that Oladokun has found her way as an artist. She isn’t trying on styles as much. She’s figured out that she doesn’t sound like anyone else and she’s good with it. That aura might be summed up best on “Somehow,” the album’s final cut, which starts with a somber piano riff, then ascends to a soaring, “Hey Jude”-style crescendo.

“Somehow, things just get better,” she sings. “Somehow. Somehow.”

It’s a hard-won message for our times — and a fitting end to an album that might need its own category.

— Scott Stroud  
Associated Press



Chicks: Trio hits the road for tour

FROM PAGE 18

**Do you feel like the Bush incident, which took place 20 years ago, is still a defining episode in the Chicks’ story?**

**Maines:** It’s defining in the way it set us free. It got us out of this box of country music, which we never wanted to be in and never felt like that’s who we were. We didn’t have to do any of that bulls— anymore. It wasn’t like, “Oh, country music, please take us back.” It was middle fingers: “Bye!”

**Anything to report on new music?**

**Maines:** We usually do one thing at a time, and right now it’s touring. We have an album we know we want to make after the tour that hopefully we’ll jump into with Jack. It’s more of a conceptual album. We don’t have a label right now, so we’re trying to figure out what we’re gonna do.

**Have you been playing new songs in rehearsals?**

**Maines:** Not originals. Covers.  
**Strayer:** We always play some Patty Griffin. We did a James Taylor song the other day that we ended up throwing in the show.

**Maines:** And we’re doing a Miley/Dolly song.

**Long shows seem to be in right now. Taylor Swift’s doing nearly three-and-a-half hours, same for Bruce Springsteen. But in Vegas —**

**Maguire:** We’re not allowed to play over two hours.

**Gotta get people back into the casino.**

**Maines:** I can only think of one person I would want to watch for three-and-a-half hours.

**Who’s that?**

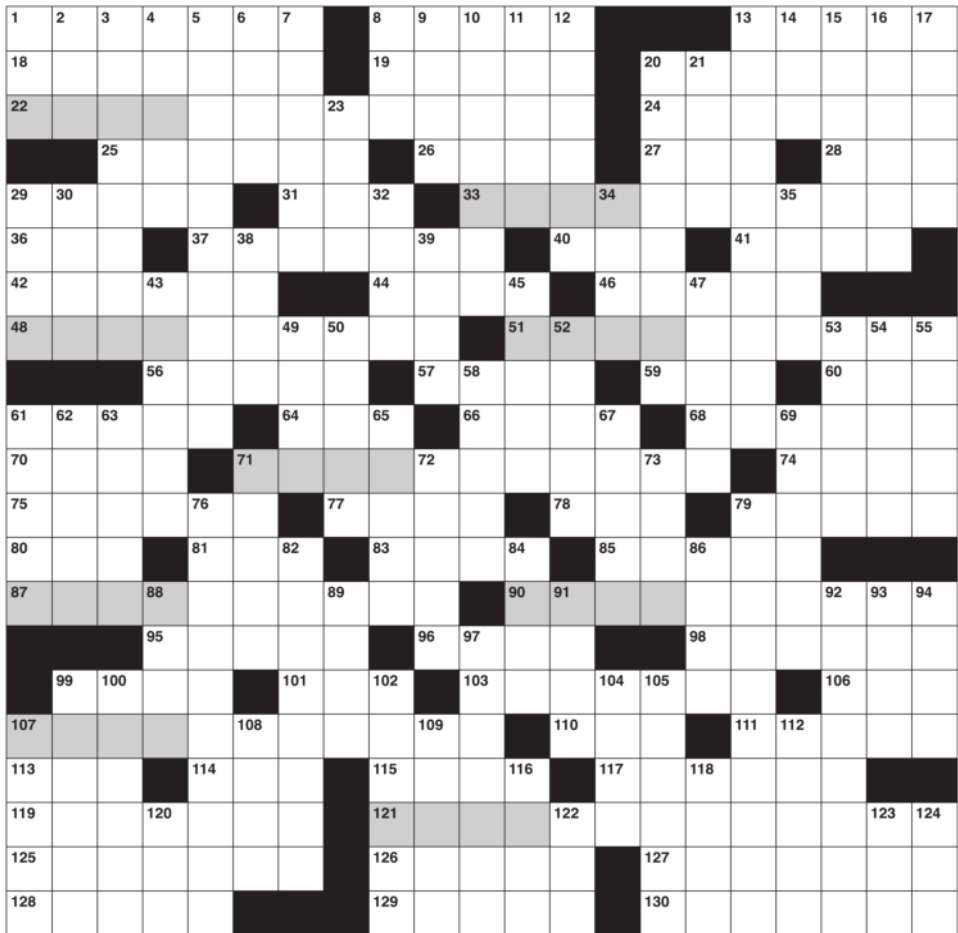
**Maines:** Beyoncé.



## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

BY WILL NEDIGER / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

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FACES

# Pursuit of happiness

‘The Office’ actor crisscrosses the globe to compile ‘Rainn Wilson and the Geography of Bliss’ TV series

**BY MARK KENNEDY**  
*Associated Press*

**R**ainn Wilson wanted to find inner happiness. So he got on a plane. Many planes.

The actor, who memorably played scheming, egotistical Dwight Schrute on “The Office,” has crisscrossed the world to explore how people in different countries find their glee.

The result is “Rainn Wilson and the Geography of Bliss,” a new Peacock series that follows Wilson looking for some deep answers as he takes in a drag show in Thailand and gets in a boxing ring in Ghana. The show premiered Thursday, in time for Mental Health Awareness Month.

“I wanted it to be a personal voyage of like, ‘Hey, can this make me happier? Can I share my journey? Can I share my story?’ But, at the same time, I wanted it to be something for everyone — you could feel like you’re going on that trip, too.”

Armed with global data on happiness, Rainn visits countries both high and low in happiness, digging into philosophy and history and his own story. He quotes philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and scrubs elephants.

In Iceland, which is high on the happiness index, he goes skinny-dipping in a cold fjord, plays with adorable lambs, eats ice cream and swallows a bottle of cod liver oil. He asks why cold climates seem to produce happier people and if the Icelandic embrace of being flexible in the face of an ever-changing climate is important to happiness.

“Iceland is a land of contradictions. I’ve never met more individualistic folks than the Icelanders. They’re all so quirky and

wonderful and interesting. And at the same time, they really love their collectivity,” he says over Zoom.

“There was this incredible balance in Iceland between radical individuality and personal expression and also really trusting the collective and feeling part of the collective. We haven’t worked this out in America yet.”

The series is based on “The Geography of Bliss: One Grump’s Search for the Happiest Places in the World,” a book by Eric Weiner, a former NPR international correspondent who admits he was a little nervous when Wilson first came on board.

“He was Dwight from ‘The Office’ — goofy, funny Dwight. And I thought, ‘Oh, no, really?’ But then I quickly discovered that Rainn Wilson is not Dwight, and I’ve had a chance to get to know him a bit,” says Weiner. “And he is a very thoughtful, very curious, actually very serious guy, the way a lot of comedians and comedic actors are.”

Wilson starts the series by revealing on camera that he comes from an unhappy family, has battled depression starting in his teens and has anxiety disorder. It was key for him to acknowledge that to fans and viewers.

“It’s super-important to share your struggle,” he says. “In the current environment and the Instagram-ification of American life, everyone looks happy and well-curated and in awesome locations and coping perfectly. And someone’s at home alone suffering.”

If Iceland is on top, the show also visits Bulgaria, which ranks low on happiness, Wilson explains that the country’s long history of being subjugated — by Ottomans, Nazis and Soviets — has led to mistrust in



PEACOCK/AP

**Rainn Wilson, left, travels to Iceland and cuddles a lamb as part of his quest to seek life’s deeper answers in “Rainn Wilson and the Geography of Bliss.”**

government and strangers. Perhaps, then, self-expression brings joy and so might trust in the authorities?

“I’m realizing why I feel so at ease in this place,” he says on the show. “I think I’m Bulgarian. I’m a worrier. I’m a pessimist. For as long as I can remember, I’ve walked a constant tightrope in avoidance of bad feelings.”

Wilson joins a crowded field of new celebrity travel hosts, such as Eugene Levy, Zac Efron, José Andrés, Chris Hemsworth, Will Smith, Stanley Tucci, Macaulay Culkin and Ewan McGregor. But few shows have their host dress up like a Viking, drive a tuk-tuk or skateboard in the former Soviet bloc.

“It’s basically philosophy on the road,” says Weiner, who is leading a happiness tour group going to Iceland in October. “The travel is the candy that gets you to the main course of these really big philosophical issues about suffering and happiness and meaning and trust and all these issues

that Rainn wrestles with.”

What is the secret to happiness? The show indicates that the answers may not be as complicated as we think it is — and it may include getting very, very cold.

“There’s a set of tools. There is finding community, being of service to others, connecting to nature. Meditation. Gratitude, Wilson says. “Cold immersion therapy or cold and heat therapy. It’s not rocket science.”

And, appropriately, you might add travel to that list. Wilson this time wasn’t traveling to sit on a beach and sip a coconut cocktail — although there’s nothing wrong with that, he insists — but to learn.

“Traveling to find joy is something that everyone can do. But it does involve getting to know strangers, connecting with them, finding community, learning, getting humble,” he says. “Travel itself can be a great antidote to disconnection and unhappiness.”

## Baldwin joins film about Kent State shootings

A month after prosecutors dropped criminal charges against Alec Baldwin in the fatal “Rust” tragedy, he’s joined the cast of an upcoming film about the 1970 Kent State shootings.

The movie, written and directed by Karen Slade, depicts the tragic events of May 4, 1970, when the Ohio National Guard opened fire on an anti-Vietnam War student protest at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine others.

Baldwin will play Kent State University president Robert I. White, per The Hollywood Reporter.

The film will also star Clancy Brown, Zachary Gordon, Christopher Ammanuel, Andrew Ortenberg and Jacqueline Emerson.

The film is currently in preproduction and is produced by Kristen Moser of Autumn Moon Productions, with executive producers including Tom Ortenberg (“Snowden,” “Spotlight”).



TNS

**Dwayne Johnson says he copes with bouts of depression by working out and by feeling gratitude for the experience of being a father.**

# Johnson discusses bouts of depression: ‘I didn’t know what mental health was’

**BY JONAH VALDEZ**  
*Los Angeles Times*

There was a dark period when Dwayne Johnson was in college that the actor remembers as his “first bout of depression.”

Before movie stardom and even professional wrestling, Johnson wanted to play professional football. But while playing for the University of Miami, the “Black Adam” star was sidelined with a serious shoulder injury that required surgery. And with his dream crushed, his mental health suffered.

“[I] didn’t want to go to school, I was ready to leave, I left school, I didn’t take any midterms,” Johnson recalled last week on “The Pivot Podcast.” “At that time ... I didn’t know what mental health was, I didn’t know what depression was, I just knew I didn’t want to be there.”

During the hourlong interview with podcast co-hosts and former NFL players Ryan Clark, Fred Taylor and Channing Crowder, Johnson shared bits of his mental-health journey and the “three bouts of depression” he has faced.

Another experience with depression was during his divorce from his first wife, Dany Garcia, in 2008. At the time, Johnson said, he still didn’t know what depression was, and he again went through it alone.

When his mental health began to decline again around 2017, Johnson said, he was finally able to identify his experience as depression.

“And luckily at that time, I had some friends I could lean on and say, ‘Hey you know I’m feeling a little wobbly now, got a little struggle happening, I’m seeing a little gray and not the blue,’” Johnson said.

This isn’t the first time Johnson has been candid about his mental health. In a 2021 interview with Men’s Health, he shared how growing up he was never taught how to communicate his feelings or ask for help.

“Asking for help is not a weakness,” he said. “As a matter of fact, asking for help is our superpower, and men, especially us, we fall into this trap of being really averse to vulnerability, because we always want to be strong and feel like we can take on the world.”

Johnson also turns to the gym as a way to deal with depression. He said on the podcast that training “truly is my anchor.”

Johnson also shared how being a parent has helped his mental health.

“The saving grace for me has really been my daughters, the three of them, and being a girl dad,” Johnson said. “You look at them and you realize ... this is what it’s all about.”



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Authorities capture 2nd inmate who escaped

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — The second of two inmates who escaped from a Philadelphia prison earlier this month was captured Wednesday morning, authorities said.

City police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw said Ameen Hurst, 18, was arrested by U.S. Marshals in West Philadelphia, but further details on the capture were not immediately disclosed.

Hurst and Nasir Grant, 24, escaped from the Philadelphia Industrial Correction Center on May 7 by cutting a hole in a fence surrounding a recreation yard, the Philadelphia Department of Prisons has said.

Officials have said the inmates were housed in the same unit, but different cells.

Grant was arrested May 11 after members of a fugitive task force who were conducting surveillance in North Philadelphia saw him leave a residence dressed as a woman. He was stopped in a car nearby.

## Work on hydropower line can restart, state says

**ME** LEWISTON — The construction of a 145-mile transmission line in Maine will be able to resume now that the state has removed a suspension order on the project.

The New England Clean Energy Connect project is no longer suspended, as it had been since fall 2021, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection said Tuesday. The department’s ruling came less than a month after a jury said that developers had a constitutional right to proceed with the \$1 billion transmission project.

The project is designed to supply up to 1,200 megawatts of Canadian hydropower to the New England power grid. That is enough electricity for about a million homes.

However, state voters opposed the project in an election, and work stopped.

It was unclear exactly when the work would resume.

## Publisher sues school district over book bans

**FL** TALLAHASSEE — Publisher Penguin Random House and PEN America sued a Florida school district Wednesday over its removal of books about race and LGBTQ+ identities, the latest opposition to a policy central to Gov. Ron DeSantis’ agenda as he prepares to run for president.

The federal lawsuit alleges the Escambia County School District and its School Board are violating the First Amendment through the removal of 10 books from library shelves.

The case does not name DeSantis as a defendant though the Republican governor has championed policies that allow the censorship and challenging of books based on whether they are appropriate for



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

## Saying ‘Yes!’ to the dress

**Ashley Alexander, 18, reacts as she tries on a prom dress at the Prom Boutique at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, on Tuesday, in Miami. Project UP-START offers Miami-Dade County Schools students in economic need the opportunity to choose prom wear items free of charge for upcoming prom events.**

children in schools.

“Books have the capacity to change lives for the better, and students in particular deserve equitable access to a wide range of perspectives. Censorship, in the form of book bans like those enacted by Escambia County, are a direct threat to democracy and our constitutional rights,” Nihar Malaviya, CEO of Penguin Random House, said in a statement.

## Sheriff agrees to review to settle bias complaint

**GA** SAVANNAH — A Georgia sheriff has agreed to review his department’s policies on bias-free policing and other practices to settle a race discrimination complaint filed by a historically Black college on behalf

of students whose bus was pulled over and searched for drugs, the U.S. Justice Department said Monday.

The April 2022 traffic stop by sheriff’s deputies in Liberty County caused outrage at Delaware State University, with campus President Tony Allen saying the women’s lacrosse team had been humiliated and intimidated by deputies searching their bus.

University administrators filed a complaint with the Justice Department, saying the traffic stop along Interstate 95 south of Savannah had been racially motivated and had violated the students’ civil rights.

The Justice Department said in a statement that the Liberty County Sheriff’s Office had agreed to examine its department’s traffic stop and search policies and “make nec-

essary updates,” as well as develop and enact new data collection procedures.

Liberty County Sheriff William Bowman, who is Black, insisted his department doesn’t practice racial profiling after being criticized by Delaware State students and administrators last year.

## Deal reached on tax credits, teacher pay hikes

**OK** OKLAHOMA CITY — Public school teachers across Oklahoma will receive pay raises of up to \$6,000 annually under a deal announced by Republican leaders on Monday that also clears the way for a voucher-style tax credit program for families who home-school their children or send them to private schools.

The package announced by Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt and GOP leaders in the House and Senate includes \$625 million in new recurring funding for education and includes six weeks of paid maternity leave for certified school personnel. The details of the plan are expected to easily pass the House and Senate as soon as this week and be signed into law by the governor.

The agreement paves the way for the “school choice” plan that already passed the House and Senate that includes a \$1,000 per-student tax credit for families who home-school their children and a tiered tax credit between \$5,000 per student for families earning more than \$250,000 per year up to \$7,500 per student for families earning \$75,000 or less.

## Chief: Man ran at officer while holding sword

**MA** OXFORD — A man shot by police in Massachusetts last weekend was holding a sword over his head and running at an officer at a “full sprint,” police said.

The 23-year-old man faces attempted murder and other charges in connection with the encounter in Oxford at about 6 a.m. Sunday, police Chief Anthony Saad said in a statement Tuesday.

The officer was in a marked cruiser but was not responding to a call when the suspect, on foot, abruptly entered the roadway and blocked the vehicle, Saad said.

The suspect, an Oxford resident, advanced on the cruiser while swinging the sword, so the officer put his vehicle into reverse “to create distance between him and the defendant,” Saad said.

When the officer could not back up any farther due to traffic, he stepped out of the cruiser and ordered the suspect to drop the sword.

The suspect “then began a full sprint towards the officer with the sword over his head,” the statement said. The officer again ordered the suspect to stop before opening fire when the man got close enough to strike.

The suspect remains hospitalized, the chief said.

## Fentanyl fuels string of deadly overdoses

**OR** PORTLAND — A series of suspected drug overdoses left at least eight people dead over the weekend in Portland, according to the city’s police bureau.

Six of the deaths were likely related to fentanyl, a potent synthetic opioid. Several of those who died believed they were using cocaine, when it was actually fentanyl or a mix of the two substances, the city’s police bureau said in a news release.

The deaths occurred between early Friday morning and late Saturday afternoon.





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OPINION

There’s still a border crisis even if Biden won’t admit it

By JONAH GOLDBERG  
*Tribune Content Agency*

The lifting of Title 42 — which allowed the government to use the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to expel migrants for public health purposes — has not resulted in “chaos” at the border, according to most news accounts. Intended or not, this is a great example of managing expectations. Because President Joe Biden predicted things would be “chaotic for a while” after Title 42 expired, “chaos” at the border suddenly became the political metric to watch for, as if a monumental crisis absent chaos is no big deal.

On March 29, 2019, former Obama administration Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson commented on 4,000 apprehensions at the border that week. “I know that a thousand overwhelms the system. I cannot begin to imagine what 4,000 a day looks like, so we are truly in a crisis.”

Last Tuesday, just before Title 42 ended, 11,000 migrants were apprehended. On Wednesday, another 11,000. On Thursday, it dropped to 10,000 and on Friday it edged down to a mere 6,200. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas claimed this as proof that the Biden administration’s post-Title 42 plan was working. He told ABC News on Sunday, “Over the past two days, the United States Border Patrol has seen an approximately 50% drop in the number of people encountered at our southern border.”

This is typical of the larger problem. A talking point on a news show is no substitute for a successful policy. Pan out to a more meaningful unit of time, and you can see the disaster for what it is. In fiscal year 2022, a record-

breaking 2.2 million migrants were apprehended, up from 1.7 million the year before.

The Biden administration seems to struggle more with the “messaging” of the crisis than the actual crisis — which is why it has often agonized about whether to use the word “crisis” at all. Mayorkas refuses to say it, preferring a “significant challenge.”

Two things have ruined this media-focused strategy. First, the reality at the border, shown nightly on TV, and second, the remarkably successful stunt by Republican governors of sending migrants to big cities run by Democrats. After all, if millions of migrants crowding overwhelmed border states isn’t a crisis, why should sending thousands to “sanctuary cities” be a big deal? But of course it is a problem — which is why the mayors of New York, the District of Columbia and Chicago have all declared emergencies, completely undermining the White House’s spin efforts.

Now, because of the end of Title 42, the administration is scrambling to come up with a real-world strategy to stem the tide. Part of that strategy, to the horror of activists and liberal Democrats, involves restoring some of Donald Trump’s most controversial immigration policies, denying entry to migrants who do not first seek asylum in a transit country (or apply for asylum before reaching the U.S. border, using an app that is unable to handle the volume of requests).

This puts Biden in a double bind. He’s already lost voters outside his base, and now his base may come to hate his immigration policies too. Biden’s polling on immigration is already a disaster, with his approval on the issue consistently well below his already-low

overall approval. A survey of seven battleground states last month found that only 32% of voters approved of his handling of the issue. Embracing Trump-lite policies could erode that 32% without improving his standing with other voters if tangible success remains elusive.

Though it’s probably too late, one solution might be to look for bipartisanship. The administration insists its hands are tied by existing immigration law. OK, then let’s write a new law. House Republicans just passed a very tough immigration bill that, among other provisions, would restrict asylum and restart border wall construction. The Senate would never pass it as is, though it has sparked talk of bipartisan negotiations in the Senate. But Biden has already issued a veto threat, in part because it “does nothing to address the root causes of migration.” So now “comprehensive” immigration policy has to solve all of the political, economic and climatological crises in South America? That’s a lot to ask. Besides, the root cause of the present crisis is the widespread, and plausible, belief that showing up at the border is worth the risk.

Allowing Republicans to have a say in immigration policy would not only buttress Biden’s constant rhapsodizing about the glories of “unity,” it also would give the GOP some political ownership of the issue.

Sadly, Biden would rather continue to prattle on about unity while demonizing his opponents and unilaterally taking all the blame for the challenging situation at the border.

Jonah Goldberg is editor-in-chief of The Dispatch and the host of The Remnant podcast.

Biden has no power to unilaterally raise the debt ceiling

By NOAH FELDMAN  
*Bloomberg Opinion*

If Congress fails to raise the debt limit, can President Joe Biden somehow borrow more money to save the United States from default? The short answer is no. But that hasn’t stopped a group of Senate Democrats from urging Biden to act unilaterally by invoking the 14th Amendment.

Yet the standoff between the president and Congress over the debt ceiling has revived interest in a little-known provision of the 14th Amendment that says the “validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law ... shall not be questioned.” That statement, on its face, does require the government to pay its debts. But it doesn’t allow the president to ignore the law passed by Congress that caps borrowing.

The U.S. Constitution puts Congress squarely in charge of both borrowing and spending. The validity of the public debts clause doesn’t magically allow the president to violate this most basic element of the separation of powers.

This isn’t the first time we’ve had a debate about the underlying constitutional question of whether the 14th Amendment renders the debt limit somehow unconstitutional. And it’s understandable why. When a president faces a Congress not controlled by his own party, he’ll look for leverage against lawmakers that want concessions in return for raising the ceiling. Even if the president never actually invokes the clause (no president has), the argument can enhance the president’s negotiating position.

But it’s important to remember that the

whole reason the Constitution gave the spending and borrowing powers to Congress was to ensure a separation of powers between Congress and the executive branch. That separation was intended to let the political process, not the will of one person, determine how the U.S. borrows and spends money.

If the president could unilaterally ignore the debt ceiling, he would be able to borrow money without congressional approval. That’s a short step from being able to spend money without Congress — another violation of the basic constitutional scheme.

In practice, it is extraordinarily unlikely that the Biden administration would invoke constitutional grounds to ignore the debt limit. So why bother to consider the question, especially since it’s hard to begrudge the administration any tools that would help it fend off the madness of House Speaker Kevin McCarthy’s threat to force the country into default?

The answer is that too much loose talk about the president’s ability to ignore Congress is bad for the separation of powers — and therefore bad for constitutional stability.

Remember when President Donald Trump wanted to build his border wall even though Congress had refused to appropriate money for it? That showdown also represented a threat to the separation of powers.

Trump, too, had a sort of constitutional argument. He claimed a national security interest and invoked his powers as commander in chief. That claim was illegitimate. The president can’t spend money on things Congress has refused to authorize.

That’s why I was sorry to see my Harvard colleague, emeritus professor Laurence

Tribe, reverse his long-standing (and correct!) position on the constitutionality of unilateral executive action to avoid default. In justification of his change in views, Tribe cited President Abraham Lincoln’s unilateral suspension of habeas corpus during the Civil War. But Lincoln’s action was deeply doubtful from a constitutional perspective. The Constitution, on any plausible reading, gives the power to suspend habeas corpus to Congress, not the president. Lincoln, faced with what he considered an existential threat to the United States in the form of Southern secession and border-state sympathy to the Confederacy, broke the Constitution to save the Union.

Lincoln may have been justified. That’s a matter of debate that scholars have written entire books about (mine is called “The Broken Constitution”). Regardless, Lincoln’s actions were undertaken in the most extreme imaginable circumstances. They shouldn’t form a precedent for ordinary political disputes, however wrongheaded one side may be.

With Trump campaigning to retake the presidency — and still spreading lies about his 2020 election loss — I’m hard-pressed to think of a worse time for liberals to embrace such a sweeping view of presidential power.

The obligation to pay the government’s debts lies on Congress — where the framers put it. If McCarthy decides not to pay the nation’s bills, there’s nothing Biden can do about it.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist Noah Feldman is a professor of law at Harvard University and author of “The Broken Constitution: Lincoln, Slavery and the Refounding of America.” This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.



Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

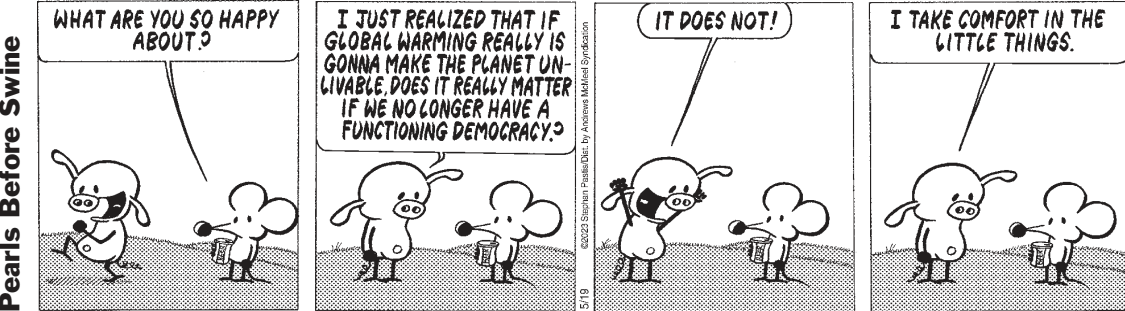
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15			16						17			
		18						19				
20	21					22	23					
24					25					26	27	28
29				30						31		
32			33						34			
			35					36				
37	38	39					40					
41					42	43					44	45
46					47					48		
49					50					51		

- ACROSS
- 49 Buddies
- 50 "Glamour" rival
- 51 Levy
- 22 — Dame
- 23 Picnic interlopers
- 25 Colorations
- 26 Jimmy Carter, e.g.
- 27 Always
- 28 Long for
- 30 Roman 1052
- 33 Eugene O'Neill's works
- 34 Oil cartel
- 36 Stag
- 37 Omit
- 38 "Casablanca" role
- 39 Void partner
- 40 And others (Lat.)
- 42 Actor Vigoda
- 43 Online address
- 44 Khan title
- 45 — -Mex cuisine
- DOWN
- 1 Calendar abbr.
- 2 Rowing tool
- 3 Like the moon's surface
- 4 Diamond side
- 5 Stadium cheers
- 6 "Exodus" hero
- 7 Asian holiday
- 8 In a pleasant way
- 9 Latin 101 word
- 10 Gasp for air
- 11 Checks out
- 16 Ship wood
- 19 Fibs
- 20 Morose
- 21 Yard tool
- 1 Elmer, to Bugs
- 4 Dorm alternative
- 8 Scruff
- 12 Corn unit
- 13 Swiss river
- 14 Commitment-phobe's response
- 15 Scrooge's clerk
- 17 Walking stick
- 18 Golf props
- 19 "August: Osage County" playwright Tracy
- 20 "Awesome!"
- 22 Hammer target
- 24 Songbird
- 25 Melon variety
- 29 Luau instrument
- 30 Some shelter adoptees
- 31 Actress Mendes
- 32 Busybodies
- 34 Portent
- 35 Ascend
- 36 Left at sea
- 37 Egyptian peninsula
- 40 Power co. supply
- 41 Model Heidi
- 42 Dictator
- 46 Madonna's "La — Bonita"
- 47 Muffin choice
- 48 Census stat

Frazz



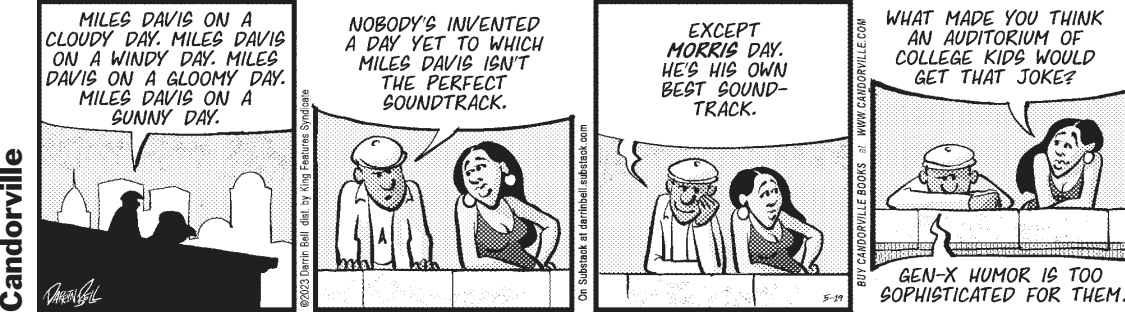
Pearls Before Swine



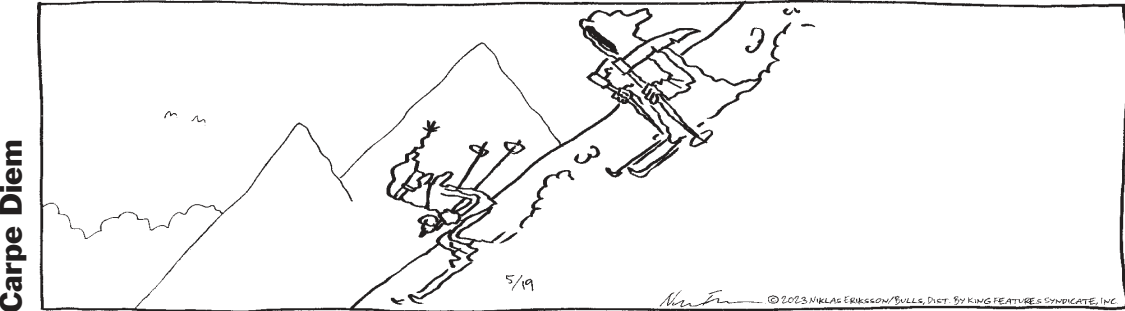
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

5-19 CRYPTOQUIP

T G K X G A D E B G A E V P X M N S V

P G L V S G E B K T G T H P L N P F D H X V E

H Q N L F G M Z H Q Z M G P Z V M

F M N Q Z G A Z ? D N P Z - D V P P .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SUPPOSING SINGER RAITT HAD BECOME A BODYBUILDER, I THINK HER NICKNAME WOULD BE BRAWNY BONNIE.

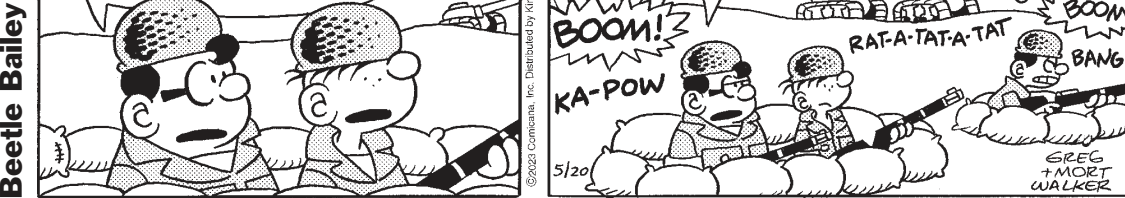
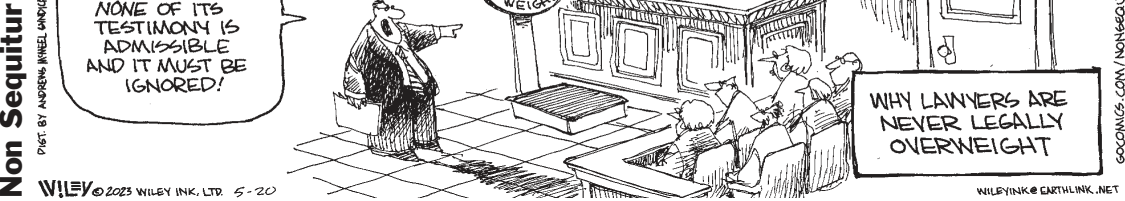
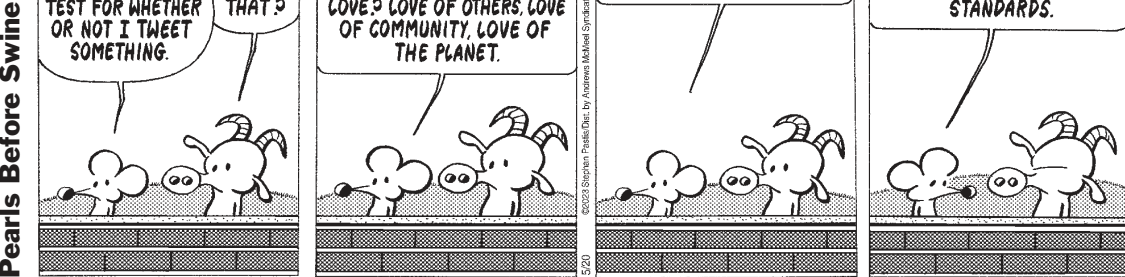
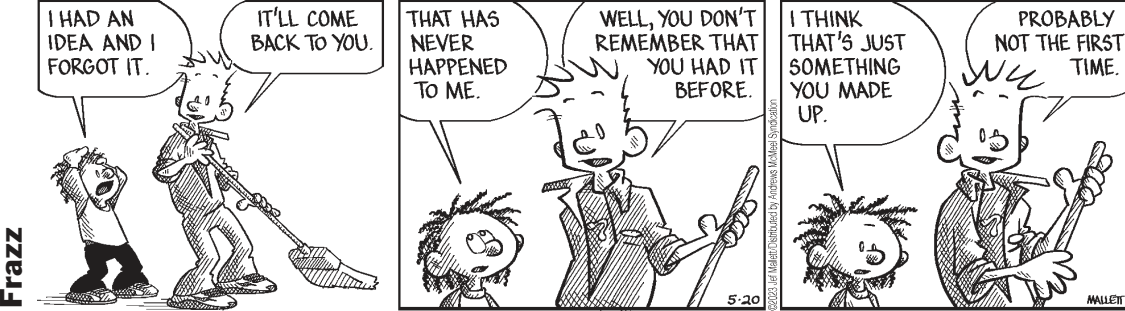
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals S



Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19				20			
			21	22			23	24				
25	26	27					28			29	30	31
32								33				
34					35		36					
			37				38					
39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48				49					50			
51				52					53			
54				55					56			

- ACROSS
- 1 Hunger indicator

5 Poker type

9 Perfume label word

12 — -friendly

13 Ginormous

14 Fuel stat

15 Kate of “The Martian”

16 Tehran’s country

17 Actor Gibson

18 Per person

19 Run after K

20 Extra-long

21 Wife of Adam

23 Pair with an air

25 Bluegrass instruments

28 Singer Grande

32 Den fixture

33 Cupid’s missile

34 Closed tight

36 Pass by

37 Baton Rouge sch.

38 Chiding sound

39 Lean and supple

42 A/C measure

44 “Born Free” lioness

48 — polloi

49 Skedaddled

50 San — Obispo, CA

51 Addams cousin
- 52 Anger

53 Don’t have

54 Astronaut

55 Wallet stuffers

56 Guffaws
- DOWN
- 1 Cougar

2 Now, on a memo

3 Pianist Peter

4 Fruity toast spread

5 Puts on a happy face

6 School session

7 Kampala’s land

8 Quarterback

9 Austen novel

10 Pinnacle

11 Wrinkly fruit
- 20 “One Tree Hill” actress

22 November tally

24 Russian range

25 “Mic Drop” K-pop band

26 “Hail, Caesar!”

27 Code-breaking gp.

29 Dadaist Jean

30 Refusals

31 Shock partner

35 Capital of Ireland

36 Chopin pieces

39 Caprice

40 Greek vowel

41 Ceremony

43 Far (Pref.)

45 Hawaiian feast

46 Ailing

47 Requests

49 To and —

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

5-20 CRYPTOQUIP

KGUD M NCEEB FZ ZRUMSFDA

ZEYURGFDA SFBU M OMFZ EC

M SUNRUCD, KGMR FZ GU

OEFDA? RMBFDA M ZRMDO.

Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: HOW COULD YOU DESCRIBE SOMEBODY WHO HAS MISPLACED AN IMPORTANT ROSTER PRINTOUT? LIST-LESS.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: A equals G



# SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

PRO SOCCER							
MLS							
EASTERN CONFERENCE							
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
Cincinnati	8	1	3	27	18	12	
New England	7	2	3	24	19	11	
Nashville	6	3	4	22	17	8	
Atlanta	6	4	3	21	25	21	
Columbus	5	4	3	18	23	14	
Philadelphia	5	4	3	18	17	14	
Charlotte FC	5	5	3	18	18	23	
D.C. United	4	5	4	16	16	16	
NYCFC	4	5	4	16	15	16	
Orlando City	4	4	4	16	13	15	
Inter Miami CF	5	7	0	15	13	14	
CF Montréal	5	7	0	15	11	20	
Chicago	3	4	5	14	15	18	
New York	2	4	7	13	8	11	
Toronto FC	2	4	7	13	13	17	
WESTERN CONFERENCE							
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
Seattle	7	4	2	23	20	11	
LAFC	6	1	4	22	21	9	
FC Dallas	6	3	3	21	15	12	
Saint Louis SC	6	4	1	19	22	13	
San Jose	5	4	3	18	16	16	
Portland	4	5	4	16	18	19	
Minnesota	4	5	3	15	11	14	
Houston	4	5	2	14	10	10	
Vancouver	3	4	5	14	16	14	
Austin FC	3	5	4	13	12	18	
Real Salt Lake	3	6	3	12	10	20	
Colorado	2	5	6	12	10	18	
Sporting KC	2	7	4	10	9	17	
LA Galaxy	2	7	3	9	10	20	

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Wednesday's games**

Atlanta 4, Colorado 0  
Charlotte FC 2, Chicago 1  
Cincinnati 3, CF Montréal 0  
Columbus 2, LA Galaxy 0  
New York City FC 1, Orlando City 1, tie  
D.C. United 0, Philadelphia 0, tie  
New York 0, Toronto FC 0, tie  
FC Dallas 2, Vancouver 1  
Minnesota 1, Houston 0  
Nashville 2, Miami 1  
Portland 0, Real Salt Lake 0, tie  
Sporting Kansas City 1, Los Angeles FC 1, tie

**Saturday's games**

Nashville at Charlotte FC  
Columbus at Cincinnati  
LA Galaxy at D.C. United  
Orlando City at Miami  
CF Montréal at New York  
New England at Philadelphia  
Toronto FC at Austin FC  
Atlanta at Chicago  
Houston at FC Dallas  
Real Salt Lake at Colorado  
Sporting Kansas City at Saint Louis City SC

San Jose at Los Angeles FC  
Minnesota at Portland  
Seattle at Vancouver

**Saturday, May 27**

Miami at CF Montréal  
Chicago at New England  
Philadelphia at New York City FC  
Atlanta at Orlando City  
D.C. United at Toronto FC  
Austin FC at Houston  
Real Salt Lake at Minnesota  
Vancouver at Saint Louis City SC  
Cincinnati at Colorado  
Charlotte FC at LA Galaxy  
FC Dallas at San Jose  
New York at Seattle

**NWSL**

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	4	0	3	15	10	5
OL Reign	4	2	1	13	12	6
Gotham FC	4	2	1	13	7	6
Portland	3	1	3	12	18	10
San Diego	4	3	0	12	12	10
North Carolina	3	3	1	10	8	9
Houston	2	2	3	9	5	6
Angel City	2	3	2	8	11	13
Louisville	1	2	4	7	9	9
Orlando	2	4	1	7	5	11
Kansas City	2	5	0	6	9	14
Chicago	1	5	1	4	11	18

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Saturday's games**

Angel City at North Carolina  
Washington at Orlando  
Louisville at Kansas City  
San Diego at Houston

**Sunday's games**

Chicago at Portland  
Gotham FC at OL Reign

**Friday, May 26**

Houston at Kansas City  
Portland at San Diego

**Saturday, May 27**

Angel City at OL Reign  
North Carolina at Louisville  
Orlando at Chicago

TENNIS	
Italian Open	
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>At Foro Italoico</b> <b>Rome</b>	
<b>Purse: Euro 7,705,780</b> <b>Surface: Red clay</b> <b>Men's Singles</b> <b>Quarterfinals</b>	
Holger Rune (7), Denmark, def. Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, 6-2, 4-6, 6-2. Casper Ruud (4), Norway, def. Francisco Cerundolo (24), Argentina, 7-6 (5), 6-4.	
<b>Women's Singles</b> <b>Quarterfinals</b>	
Jelena Ostapenko (20), Latvia, def. Paula Badosa, Spain, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3. Elena Rybakina (7), Kazakhstan, def. Iga Swiatek (1), Poland, 2-6, 7-6 (3), 2-2, ret.	
<b>Men's Doubles</b> <b>Quarterfinals</b>	
Marcel Granollers, Spain, and Horacio Zeballos, Argentina, def. Rajeev Ram, United States, and Joe Salisbury (2), Britain, 6-4, 5-7, 10-6. Wesley Koolhof, Netherlands, and Neal Skupski (1), Britain, def. Jason Kubler and Alex de Minaur, Australia, 6-4, 6-4.	
<b>Women's Doubles</b> <b>Quarterfinals</b>	
Jessica Pegula and Coco Gauff (1), United States, def. Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara (6), Japan, 7-6 (5), 6-4. Bethanie Mattek-Sands, United States, and Marie Bouzkova, Czech Republic, def. Lyudmyla Kichenok, Ukraine, and Jelena Ostapenko (2), Latvia, 7-6 (3), 6-3.	
Trophée Clarins	
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>At Lagardere Paris Racing Club</b> <b>Paris</b>	
<b>Purse: \$115,000</b> <b>Surface: Red clay</b> <b>Women's Singles</b> <b>Round of 16</b>	
Linda Noskova (4), Czech Republic, def. Katherine Sebov, Canada, 7-5, 6-2. Varvara Gracheva (2), Russia, def. Oksana Selekhmeteva, Russia, 6-0, 6-3. Diane Parry, France, def. Yuan Yue, China, 6-2, 6-3. Kamilla Rakhimova (9), Russia, def. Mirra Andreeva, Russia, 6-2, 6-4.	
<b>Women's Doubles</b> <b>Quarterfinals</b>	
Jang Su Jeong, South Korea, and Zhaoxuan Yang, China, def. Tereza Mihalikova, Slovakia, and Miriam Kolodziejova (2), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2. Vera Zvonareva, Russia, and Anna Danilina, Kazakhstan, def. Natela Dzalamidze, Russia, and Lidziya Marozava, Belarus, 7-5, 5-7, 10-2.	

NCAA Tournament	
<b>(Double elimination; x-if necessary)</b> <b>Norman (Okla.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Oklahoma (51-1) vs. Hofstra (29-25) <b>Game 2</b> — Missouri (34-24) vs. California (33-19-1)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Clemson (S.C.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Clemson (46-9) vs. UNC-Greensboro (37-20) <b>Game 2</b> — Auburn (40-17) vs. Cal St.-Fullerton (33-19)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Stanford (Calif.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Florida (36-20) vs. Loyola Marymount (27-20) <b>Game 2</b> — Stanford (40-13) vs. Long Beach St. (31-21)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Durham (N.C.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Duke (45-10) vs. George Mason (35-22) <b>Game 2</b> — Charlotte (33-21) vs. Campbell (41-16)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Tuscaloosa (Ala.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Middle Tennessee (39-18) vs. Cent. Arkansas (44-10) <b>Game 2</b> — Alabama (40-18) vs. LIU (32-24)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Evanston (Ill.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Kentucky (30-20-1) vs. Miami	

DEALS	
Wednesday's transactions	
<b>BASEBALL</b> <b>Major League Baseball</b>	
<b>MLB</b> — Suspended New York Yankees RHP Domingo German for 10 games and fined him an undisclosed amount for violating the prohibitions on foreign substances, which resulted in his ejection prior to the bottom of the fourth inning of their game against Toronto on May 16th .	
<b>American League</b>	
<b>KANSAS CITY ROYALS</b> — Transferred LHP Ryan Yarbrough from the 15-day IL to the 60-day IL. Selected the contract of RHP Mike Mayers from Omaha (IL).	
<b>NEW YORK YANKEES</b> — Placed RHP Ian Hamilton on the 15-day IL. Recalled LHP Nick Ramirez from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL).	
<b>OAKLAND ATHLETICS</b> — Acquired RHP Lucas Erceg from Milwaukee for cash considerations.	
<b>TAMPA BAY RAYS</b> — Optioned RHP Yonny Chirinos to Durham (IL). Selected the contract of RHP Zack Burdi from Durham. Sent RHP Javier Guerra outright to Durham.	
<b>TEXAS RANGERS</b> — Reinstated SS Corey Seager from the 10-day IL. Optioned C Sam Huff to Round Rock (PCL).	
<b>National League</b>	
<b>ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS</b> — Recalled RHP Luis Frias from Reno (PCL). Optioned OF Alek Thomas to Reno.	
<b>LOS ANGELES DODGERS</b> — Selected the contract of RHP Dylan Covey from Oklahoma City (IL). Optioned LHP Justin Bruihl to Oklahoma City. Transferred RHP Jimmy Nelson from the 15-day IL to the 60-day IL.	
<b>MILWAUKEE BREWERS</b> — Placed LHP Wade Miley on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Jake Cousins from Nashville (IL).	
<b>NEW YORK METS</b> — Recalled INF Mark Vientos from Syracuse (IL). Optioned INF Luis Guillorme.	
<b>ST. LOUIS CARDINALS</b> — Optioned RHP James Naile to Memphis (IL). Recalled LHP Matthew Liberatore from Memphis. Placed OF Dylan Carlson on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 15. Selected the contract of OF Oscar Mercado from Memphis. Transferred LHP Packy Naughton from the 15-day IL to the 60-day IL.	
<b>SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS</b> — Sent RHP	

AUTO RACING	
IndyCar schedule-winners	
<b>March 5</b> — Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg (Marcus Ericsson)	
<b>April 2</b> — PPG 375 (Josef Newgarden)	
<b>April 16</b> — Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach (Kyle Kirkwood)	
<b>April 30</b> — Children's of Alabama Indy	

COLLEGE SOFTBALL	
(Ohio) (37-18) <b>Game 2</b> — Northwestern (38-11) vs. E. Illinois (34-19)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Austin (Texas) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Texas (42-13-1) vs. Seton Hall (42-16) <b>Game 2</b> — Texas A&M (33-19 vs. Texas St. (34-23-1)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Knoxville (Tenn.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Indiana (41-16) vs. Louisville (35-18) <b>Game 2</b> — Tennessee (44-8) vs. N. Kentucky (23-30)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Tallahassee (Fla.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Florida St. (50-8) vs. Marist (29-28) <b>Game 2</b> — South Carolina (37-20) vs. UCF (39-19)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner, TBA	
<b>Athens (Ga.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Virginia Tech (37-18) vs. Boston U. (51-8) <b>Game 2</b> — Georgia (39-13) vs. NC Central (19-33)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Fayetteville (Ark.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Oregon (35-15) vs. Notre Dame (29-17-1) <b>Game 2</b> — Arkansas (38-17) vs. Harvard (29-15-1)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2	

Luke Jackson to Sacramento (PCL) on a rehab assignment. <b>WASHINGTON NATIONALS</b> — Recalled INF/OF Jake Alu from Rochester (IL). Placed 1B/DH Joey Meneses on the paternity list.	
<b>BASKETBALL</b> <b>Women's National Basketball Association</b>	
<b>LOS ANGELES SPARKS</b> — Waived G Yang Liwei.	
<b>FOOTBALL</b> <b>National Football League</b>	
<b>GREEN BAY PACKERS</b> — Signed TE Tucker Kraft, P Daniel Whelan. Waived DB Benjie Franklin. Claimed C D.J. Scaife off waivers from Miami.	
<b>HOUSTON TEXANS</b> — Signed TE Jordan Murray. Waived P Joe Doyle.	
<b>INDIANAPOLIS COLTS</b> — Signed WR Josh Downs.	
<b>JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS</b> — Signed LB Willie Taylor III. Placed WR Jaylon Moore on injured reserve.	
<b>LOS ANGELES RAMS</b> — Signed WR Tyler Hudson and DB Jaiden Woodbey.	
<b>MINNESOTA VIKINGS</b> — Signed WR Jordan Addison.	
<b>NEW ORLEANS SAINTS</b> — Signed DT Bryan Bresee, QB Jake Haener and OT Scott Lashley.	
<b>PITTSBURGH STEELERS</b> — Released CB Ahkello Witherspoon. Signed QB Mason Rudolph, WR Hakeem Butler and CB Luq Barcoo.	
<b>HOCKEY</b> <b>National Hockey League</b>	
<b>SEATTLE KRAKEN</b> — Returned G Chris Driedger, RW Jesper Froden and LW Tye Kartye to Coachella Valley (AHL).	
<b>TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS</b> — Returned LW Bobby McMann to Toronto (AHL).	
<b>SOCCER</b> <b>Major League Soccer</b>	
<b>AUSTIN FC</b> — Signed M David Rodriquez to a short-term contract.	
<b>NEW YORK RED BULLS</b> — Signed Ds Davi Alexandre and O'Vonte Mullins and M Amos Shapiro-Thompson to short-term contracts.	
<b>National Women's Soccer League</b> <b>NWSL</b> — Fined Angel City FC president Julie Uhrman an undisclosed amount for approaching officials at the conclusion of a May 13 match against Washington.	

Grand Prix (Scott McLaughlin) <b>May 13</b> — GMR Grand Prix (Alex Palou) <b>May 28</b> — 107th Running of the Indianapolis 500, Indianapolis. <b>June 4</b> — Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix, Detroit. <b>June 18</b> — Sonsio Grand Prix at Road America, Plymouth, Wis.	
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winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Stillwater (Okla.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Oklahoma St. (41-14) vs. UMBC (26-15) <b>Game 2</b> — Wichita St. (43-10) vs. Nebraska (34-20)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Seattle Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Minnesota (36-17) vs. McNeese St. (44-14) <b>Game 2</b> — Washington (38-12) vs. N. Colorado (26-21)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Baton Rouge (La.) Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Louisiana-Lafayette (46-13) vs. Omaha (32-15) <b>Game 2</b> — LSU (40-15) vs. Prairie View (20-30)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Salt Lake City Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — Baylor (39-16) vs. Mississippi (30-26) <b>Game 2</b> — Utah (37-13) vs. S. Illinois (36-18)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	
<b>Los Angeles Regional</b> <b>Friday, May 19</b>	
<b>Game 1</b> — UCLA (52-5) vs. Grand Canyon (46-11) <b>Game 2</b> — Liberty (38-20) vs. San Diego St. (35-15)	
<b>Saturday, May 20</b>	
<b>Game 3</b> — Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner <b>Game 4</b> — Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser <b>Game 5</b> — Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 winner	

## BRIEFLY

## Hip injury will force Nadal to miss French Open

For months, Rafael Nadal waited for his body to heal. Waited to be able to push himself around a court at full speed, with full energy, of the sort that has carried him to a record 14 titles at the French Open and a total of 22 at all Grand Slam tournaments.

He finally acknowledged Thursday it wasn’t going to happen in time for Roland Garros, where play begins in 10 days — and, while he’s not exactly sure when he will be fully recovered from a lingering hip injury, Nadal said he expects to return to action at some point and probably wrap up his career in 2024.

Speaking at a news conference at his tennis academy in Manacor, Spain, the 36-year-old Nadal announced he will miss the clay-court French Open for the first time since making his debut — and, naturally, claiming the trophy — there in 2005. He also spoke about his future in a sport that he and Big Three rivals Roger Federer, who retired last year, and Novak Djokovic have ruled for decades.

“You can’t keep demanding more and more from your body, because there comes a moment when your body raises a white flag,” said Nadal, who sat alone on a stage, wearing jeans and a white polo shirt, as his session with the media was carried live in Spain by the state broadcaster’s 24-hour sports network. “Even though your head wants to keep going, your body says this is as far it goes.”

## Aces coach Hammon denies bullying player

HENDERSON, Nev. — Las Vegas coach Becky Hammon denied Wednesday that former Aces player Dearica Hamby was bullied on her team for being pregnant, saying any ill feelings between the two came from Hamby being traded.

Hammon, one of the league’s marquee figures, said in a video call with reporters she did nothing to warrant discipline from the WNBA, which suspended her for two games without pay Tuesday after a monthslong investigation into Hamby’s allegations.

“I’ll take my little lump on the chin and keep it moving,” Hammon said. “We’re bigger than this. It’s just not who the Aces are. It’s not who I am. And so, yeah, everybody’s disappointed in the situation, but at the end of the day, we know who we are and so we go to sleep every night in that truth.”

Hammon, who in her first season last year led the Aces to the WNBA championship, spent eight seasons as an assistant coach for the San Antonio Spurs.



MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	32	12	.727	—
Baltimore	28	15	.651	3½
Toronto	25	18	.581	6½
New York	25	20	.556	7½
Boston	24	20	.545	8
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	24	20	.545	—
Detroit	19	22	.463	3½
Cleveland	19	23	.452	4
Chicago	16	28	.364	8
Kansas City	14	31	.311	10½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	26	17	.605	—
Houston	24	19	.558	2
Los Angeles	22	22	.500	4½
Seattle	21	22	.488	5
Oakland	10	35	.222	17
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	27	16	.628	—
Miami	22	21	.512	5
New York	21	23	.477	6½
Philadelphia	20	23	.465	7
Washington	18	25	.419	9
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	24	19	.558	—
Pittsburgh	23	20	.535	1
Chicago	19	24	.442	5
Cincinnati	19	24	.442	5
St. Louis	18	26	.409	6½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	28	16	.636	—
Arizona	25	19	.568	3
San Francisco	20	23	.465	7½
San Diego	20	24	.455	8
Colorado	19	25	.432	9
Wednesday's games				
Pittsburgh 8, Detroit 0 L.A. Dodgers 7, Minnesota 3 Arizona 5, Oakland 3 Kansas City 4, San Diego 3 Baltimore 3, L.A. Angels 1 Boston 12, Seattle 3 Toronto 3, N.Y. Yankees 0, 10 innings N.Y. Mets 8, Tampa Bay 7, 10 innings Atlanta 6, Texas 5 Chicago White Sox 7, Cleveland 2 Houston 7, Chicago Cubs 6 Colorado 11, Cincinnati 6 San Francisco 7, Philadelphia 4 Miami 4, Washington 3 St. Louis 3, Milwaukee 0				
Thursday's games				
L.A. Angels at Baltimore Tampa Bay at N.Y. Mets Cleveland at Chicago White Sox N.Y. Yankees at Toronto Washington at Miami L.A. Dodgers at St. Louis				
Friday's games				
Arizona (Gallen 6-1) at Pittsburgh (Oviedo 2-3) N.Y. Yankees (TBD) at Cincinnati (Lively 1-1) Milwaukee (Houser 0-0) at Tampa Bay (TBD) Chicago Cubs (Stroman 2-4) at Philadelphia (Suárez 0-0) Detroit (Boyd 2-3) at Washington (TBD) Baltimore (Gibson 4-3) at Toronto (Kikuchi 5-0) Cleveland (Quantrill 2-2) at N.Y. Mets (Carrasco 0-2) Seattle (Miller 2-0) at Atlanta (Elder 3-0) Colorado (TBD) at Texas (Pérez 4-1) Kansas City (Greinke 1-4) at Chicago White Sox (Kopech 1-4) Oakland (Waldichuk 1-2) at Houston (Bielak 0-1) L.A. Dodgers (Gonsolin 1-1) at St. Louis (Matz 0-4) Minnesota (Ryan 6-1) at L.A. Angels (Detmers 0-3) Boston (Paxton 0-0) at San Diego (Snell 1-5) Miami (Alcantara 1-4) at San Francisco (DeSclafani 3-3)				
Saturday's games				
Kansas City at Chicago White Sox Baltimore at Toronto Colorado at Texas Detroit at Washington Cleveland at N.Y. Mets Milwaukee at Tampa Bay N.Y. Yankees at Cincinnati Oakland at Houston Seattle at Atlanta Minnesota at L.A. Angels Boston at San Diego Arizona at Pittsburgh Chicago Cubs at Philadelphia Miami at San Francisco L.A. Dodgers at St. Louis				

# Yankees pitcher Germán suspended

Right-hander gets 10 games for using foreign substance; Severino likely to make start Sunday

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York Yankees pitcher Domingo Germán was suspended for 10 games Wednesday by Major League Baseball and fined an undisclosed amount for violating the sport’s prohibition of foreign substances on the mound.

The penalty was announced following Germán’s ejection in the fourth inning Tuesday night at Toronto for what an umpire said was “the stickiest hand I’ve ever felt.”

“My fingers had a hard time coming off his palm,” crew chief James Hoyer explained after the game.

The punishment was imposed by Michael Hill, MLB’s senior vice president for on-field operations. Germán did not appeal, and his suspension began with Wednesday night’s game in Toronto.

Germán cannot be replaced on the roster while he is suspended. Barring rainouts, he



Germán

will be eligible to return May 28 against San Diego.

“He went over the line that umpires deemed and now we’ve got to live with the consequences of that,” Yankees manager Aaron Boone said Wednesday in Toronto. “No one player needs to carry this load. We’ll share it all and we’ll do it together.”

Yankees right-hander Luis Severino is expected to be activated off the injured list Sunday to start in Germán’s place against the Cincinnati Reds.

A two-time All-Star, the 29-year-old Severino has not pitched for New York this season because of a right lat strain. He allowed two runs and six hits in 3⅓ innings Tuesday in a rehab start with Double-A Somerset.

Germán had retired his first nine batters Tuesday night. He denied Hoyer’s assertion,

# Jays’ Jackson admits he was tipping pitches against Judge

Associated Press

TORONTO — Toronto Blue Jays right-hander Jay Jackson says he believes he was tipping his pitches when New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge homered against him in the eighth inning Monday night.

That at-bat was quickly scrutinized when cameras caught Judge taking unusual glances toward the first-base line moments before Jackson delivered. Many questioned whether someone on the Yankees was signaling to the 2022 AL MVP an indication of which pitch Jackson was about to throw, based on either sign stealing or pitch tipping.

Jackson told The Athletic on Tuesday night that he believes a Yankees coach was able to see which grip he was using while holding the ball in his glove, and that coach relayed the info to Judge, helping him hit a 462-foot home run. Jackson was optioned to Triple-A Buffalo on Tuesday, and Toronto recalled right-hander Thomas Hatch from the Bisons.



Jackson

There is no prohibition on teammates or coaches using the naked eye to study pitchers and relay that info to batters. When the 2017 Houston Astros were punished for sign stealing, it was because they used banned electronics — including live video feeds — to help gather that intel.

Jackson said he was holding his hands up by his head before coming to the set position, in a spot that might have allowed Yankees first base coach Travis Chapman to see Jackson’s grip on the ball and identify the pitch. Chapman could have relayed the information to Judge using a hand signal.

Jackson also said he was tipping his pitches by moving his hands from his head down to the set position at his hip at different speeds on different pitches.

After Monday’s game, Judge said he was



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

**The New York Yankees’ Aaron Judge is congratulated after hitting a 462-foot home run during the eighth inning against the Blue Jays on Monday night in Toronto.**

looking into his dugout to see which of his teammates was disrupting his at-bat by yelling at plate umpire Clint Vondrak. Vondrak had just ejected Boone for arguing a low strike call to Judge.

## Explainer: What’s pitch tipping, what’s sign stealing, and when are they illegal?

Start with a couple of sideways glances by New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge toward the first-base line. Mix in a 462-foot homer a couple of pitches later. And voila! Major League Baseball has its latest cheating controversy.

The latest kerfuffle started Monday, when cameras caught Judge diverting his eyes from the pitcher just before smashing a long homer against Toronto Blue Jays right-hander Jay Jackson. The Blue Jays weren’t happy.

“It’s kind of odd that a hitter would be looking in that direction,” Toronto manager John Schneider said.

Jackson — demoted to Triple-A a day later — has since said he believes he was tipping pitches during the Judge at-bat. There is no prohibition on teammates or coaches using the naked eye to study pitchers and relay that info to batters.

So what is sign stealing? How is that different from pitch tipping? What’s legal and what’s not?

Here’s a short guide to the Yankees-Jays controversy:

**What is sign stealing?**

Sign stealing — at least by using the naked eye — is considered an art form in many baseball circles.

Coaches and players often use hand signals to relay strategy decisions — like for sacrifice bunts or stolen

base attempts — which can often be seen by the opposing team. Many times, opposing players and coaches will try to decipher patterns so they can de-code those signs, learn the other team’s strategy and gain an advantage. All of that is legal.

Historically, the most sought-after signs have been the ones catchers used to communicate pitch selection with pitchers. That recently changed.

The advent of the PitchCom system has eliminated some sign stealing because hand signals aren’t always needed between pitchers and catchers. PitchCom allows catchers or pitchers to push buttons on wristbands to call for fastballs, curves, changeups and anything else, along with the location. Their batterymate hears the result via earpiece. Short of hacking the encrypted signal, there’s seemingly no way to spy on that communication.

**What is pitch tipping?**

Pitch tipping occurs when a pitcher unwittingly telegraphs the pitch he’s about to throw.

Maybe the pitcher digs harder into his glove with his hand when he’s about to throw a breaking ball. Maybe he stands on a certain part of the pitching rubber when delivering a fastball. Maybe he holds his hand outside of his glove before delivering a pitch, giving away his grip.

Hitters and coaches devote significant time to searching for such tells, including by studying video between games. If a pitcher isn’t careful about keeping his delivery consistent, big league hitters are certain to notice.

**Are sign stealing and pitch tipping illegal?**

The short answer is no, so long as teams aren’t using illicit technology during the game — like when the 2017 Astros were found to have used a live feed from a center-field camera to spy on opposing catchers.

There are gray areas.

Schneider expressed concern about the positioning of the Yankees’ base coaches, saying his team had spoken to the commissioner’s office about the issue.

There are small boxes on the field where first- and third-base coaches are supposed to stand, but it’s not uncommon for those coaches to venture outside the box. Jackson alleges Yankees first base coach Travis Chapman was moving outside of it so he could spy on how Jackson was gripping the ball.

That would be a no-no.

“There’s boxes on the field for a reason,” Schneider said.



## AUTO RACING/HORSE RACING

# Ganassi team shines in Indy 500 practice

By MICHAEL MAROT  
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Takuma Sato and Scott Dixon gave Chip Ganassi Racing a big boost in the first Indianapolis 500 practice.

Nobody else could catch the two Indy 500 winners Wednesday.

Dixon, the 2008 champ, needed less than 10 minutes to produce a fast lap of 229.174 mph, which stayed atop the speed chart until Sato, a two-time Indy winner, topped it with a late run of 229.439.

Only Santino Ferrucci, of A.J. Foyt Enterprises, prevented Ganassi from sweeping the top three spots. His speed, 228.977, barely edged 2021 series champion and current points leader Alex Palou (228.720). Ganassi's other driver, defending 500 winner Marcus Ericsson, was seventh.

"It's good to be on the fast side and to see all the Ganassi cars (high on the speed chart)," Sato said before talking about Dixon's run. "That was quite impressive to see, Scott up to speed that quickly because I wasn't up to speed by that time."

It was an incredibly fast start as Dixon embarks on a potentially historic qualifying weekend.

If he captures a sixth career

pole, he'll tie Rick Mears' all-time 500 record (six) and become the first driver in race history to earn the top starting spot in three consecutive years. In 2022, Dixon also posted the fastest four-lap qualifying average of any Indy pole winner, 234.046, while his 53 wins and six series titles both rank second all-time to A.J. Foyt (67 wins, seven series titles).

Yet the 500 has produced some odd final results for The Iceman.

Since winning his first Indy pole and his only 500 title 15 years ago, Dixon has made 14 starts, won four poles, had six top-five finishes and been the runner-up in 2012 and 2020.

When qualifying is held Saturday and Sunday, his biggest challenge may come from his own teammates.

Palou was third for most of the final hour, four days after winning on Indy's road course for his first victory this season. Speeds are expected to increase starting Friday, when cars will be given a power boost.

"I think when it goes back to the qualifying trim, I think the speeds will be very similar to last year," Sato said when asked to predict what it will take to win the pole.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

**Takuma Sato, of Japan, prepares to practice for the Indianapolis 500 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Wednesday. Sato, a two-time Indy 500 winner, had the fastest speed of the day at 229.439 mph.**

Who else could contend?

Perhaps Rinus VeeKay, who had the fastest no-tow speed (no other cars on the track) at 223.212, or his teammate driver-owner Ed Carpenter, a three-time Indy pole winner. Carpenter's no-tow speed was 222.341.

Dixon was fourth on the no-tow list at 221.230.

Ferrucci could be in the mix, too. He's the only IndyCar driver to complete every lap and finish in the top 10 in each of the last four 500s.

"We're in full race trim, nose

down, pretty stacked on there," he said. "I'm really comfortable."

Scott McLaughlin, Team Penske's fastest driver Wednesday, and Colton Herta, the fastest driver for Andretti Autosport, both topped 228 to finish fifth and sixth in practice, respectively.

## Industry at crossroads after latest spate of horse deaths

By STEPHEN WHYNO  
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Brad Cox sent 21 horses he trains to Churchill Downs in the days leading up to the Kentucky Derby, and all came back from their races healthy with no problems.

Still, Cox is worried. Seven horses died in 10 days at and around the famous track, thrusting horse racing into a familiar, negative spotlight during Triple Crown season. The sport, by some measures is as popular as ever, is facing intense scrutiny over the health of its animal athletes.

"The sales are strong, and the purses are strong, people are still involved — hopefully we can keep it going," Cox said this week while preparing for the Preakness. "I think people are doing a good job of trying to keep their horses sound, healthy, happy and performing well. That's the main thing. I've got a lot of questions about Derby week and what all happened there."

He's not alone. Industry leaders have said racing is at a critical juncture, even though horse deaths are at their lowest number since they began being tracked, money is flowing and new national medication and anti-doping rules are set to take effect next week. The hope is to clean up the sport, making it fairer for those involved and perhaps more acceptable to



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

**Preakness Stakes entrant Mage, the Kentucky Derby winner, works out ahead of the 148th running of the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course on Wednesday in Baltimore.**

skeptics.

"When it comes to passion about the horse and all of that, we've got a really vibrant industry," Horse-racing Safety and Integrity Authority CEO Lisa Lazarus told The Associated Press. "We're at a crossroads because of essentially what happened in the leadup to the Derby weekend, on Derby day, and obviously incidents over the last few years that shows that there's nothing more important for the sustainability of our industry than ensuring that we're taking the best care possible of our

horses and the people who ride them."

The authority (HISA) is a federally mandated agency established to set uniform regulations across the United States. Its racetrack safety program has been in place since July 1, and the Antidoping and Medication Control Program that was delayed and challenged in court is set to start Monday.

In the big picture, it may already be working.

According to the Jockey Club's Equine Injury Database, the rate of 1.25 fatalities per 1,000 starts (or

fewer than 13 horses out of each 10,000 who race) in 2022 is the lowest since record-keeping of that number began in 2009. According to University of Bristol professor Tim Parkin, the final six months of last year was "the safest six-month period on record."

Those in charge of the sport understand the progress that has been made fades into the background when there is a high-profile cluster of deaths like those in Kentucky this spring, at Santa Anita in California in 2019 and at Aqueduct in New York in 2011-12.

A task force spurred by the deaths at Aqueduct more than a decade ago led to reforms in the Mid-Atlantic region that reduced fatalities there by 35%. New safety measures have also been put in place since the deaths at Santa Anita four years ago.

Dr. Dionne Benson has been at the forefront of many of those steps since taking over in the aftermath of the Santa Anita situation as chief veterinary officer for the Stronach Group, which owns and operates tracks in California, Florida and Maryland — the latter of which annually hosts the Preakness at Pimlico Racecourse in Baltimore. Benson and Stronach's 1/ST Racing chief operating officer, Aidan Butler, point to the company's investment in standing positron emission tomography machines as one innovation that has

reduced fatalities.

"It basically allows us to observe injuries to a place on their leg where it had never been seen before and was responsible for quite a few of the fractures that we'd had historically," Benson said.

Racing fatalities at Santa Anita are down 79% from 2019 to 2022. They're down more than 85% at Pimlico, where Kentucky Derby winner Mage on Saturday is favored to win the second Triple Crown race of the year.

Among the preventative measures in place in Baltimore is a series of pre-race drug tests and checkups by independent veterinarians. Benson and a surgeon will look at each Preakness horse and those in a couple of other big races this weekend, and a Maryland Racing Commission vet must clear each one to run.

"There's an actual formulated set of protocols and operating principles. They work, and they work really, really well," Butler said. "For the big days, obviously they're in effect. But then growing to all of our racing jurisdictions to make sure things that work are implemented far and wide and then hopefully other racing jurisdictions that aren't anything to do with us, per se, can adopt them and see what's working and make the industry safe across the board."



NHL



Ross D. Franklin/AP

The Arizona Coyotes played home games this season in Mullett Arena, which it shares with Arizona State University in Tempe, Ariz. The arena has a maximum capacity of 5,000, by far the smallest in the NHL.

# Voters' arena rejection leaves Coyotes in limbo

By JOHN MARSHALL  
Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Coyotes were confident more than two decades of instability were coming to a close.

A “yes” vote on a referendum for an entertainment district would allow the franchise to finally build its own arena.

When Tempe voters said no in Tuesday’s election, the team was left in shock and with no clear path forward.

“What is next for the franchise will be evaluated by our owners and the National Hockey League over the coming weeks,” Coyotes President and CEO Xavier A. Gutierrez said.

The Coyotes’ internal polling showed the three propositions related to the arena would pass easily.

Voters had other ideas, overwhelmingly saying “no” to the proposed \$2.3 billion Tempe Entertainment District, leaving the franchise still in a state of flux.

“The National Hockey League is terribly disappointed by the results of the public referendum regarding the Coyotes’ arena project in Tempe,” NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said. “We are going to review with the Coyotes what the options might be going forward.”

The Coyotes have faced instability almost since moving to Arizona from Winnipeg in 1996.

The franchise shared then-America West Arena with the NBA’s Phoenix Suns before moving to Glendale’s Gila River Arena in 2003. When former owner Jerry Moyes took the Coyotes into bankruptcy, the NHL ran the organization for four seasons.

A new ownership group brought hope in 2013, but turmoil resurfaced two years later, when the city of Glendale backed out of a long-term, multimillion-dollar lease agreement. The Coyotes leased the arena

on an annual basis until Glendale announced it was terminating the contract after the 2021-22 season.

The Coyotes’ temporary solution was to share Mullett Arena, a 5,000-seat building that’s by far the smallest in the NHL, with Arizona State University.

Now the organization has to shift gears yet again after voters rejected a proposed new arena.

The Coyotes said on Wednesday they will play in Mullett Arena next season, but it is not a long-term option. Playing at such a small arena hurts the overall league revenue and the Mullett, while nice, is not up to NHL standards.

“During the 2023-24 season, the Arizona Coyotes will play at Mullett Arena,” Gutierrez said in a statement. “We remain committed to Arizona and have already started re-engaging with local officials and sites to solidify a new permanent home in the Valley.”

One option could be to move back downtown and share what’s now called the Footprint Center with the Suns. The Coyotes had an icy relationship with former Suns owner Robert Sarver, but new owner Mat Ishbia might be more amenable to a partnership.

The Coyotes have said there was a backup plan if the Tempe deal fell through — perhaps a move to another Phoenix suburb — but have kept it under wraps.

Relocation rumors have followed the Coyotes for years and the rejection by Tempe may lead to a road out of the desert. Bettman has been adamant the franchise will remain in Arizona.

Maybe the Coyotes and league can look at relocating somewhere like Portland, Oregon, Kansas City, Houston, Milwaukee or Salt Lake City. Canadian fans in non-NHL cities have clamored to have a team of their own, so perhaps the Coyotes head back to Canada, maybe to Quebec City or Hamilton, Ontario.

“The National Hockey League is terribly disappointed by the results of the public referendum regarding the Coyotes’ arena project in Tempe.”

Gary Bettman  
NHL commissioner

## Focus: Stars veterans playing fewer minutes

FROM PAGE 32

“We sat down at the start of the year when he got hired, and I got to talk about individual players, myself and then obviously our group as a whole,” Benn said. “You know what he wanted to bring here and change a little bit, and he’s done a great job so far.”

Seguin played more than a minute less a game than last season, also his fewest since being a rookie, and had 50 points (21 goals) in 76 games. He is the only player on the Stars’ roster to win a Stanley Cup, but that was as a 19-year-old with Boston in 2011, only a year after he was the second overall draft pick. The Bruins traded him to Dallas on July 4, 2013.

Game 1 of the West finals against the Golden Knights is Friday night in Las Vegas. It is the second time in four seasons for these teams to meet the conference finals, though DeBoer was on the other bench in 2020 when the Stars won in five games in the NHL’s bubble in Canada. Tampa Bay then took the Stanley Cup in six games.

Seguin was playing with a torn labrum in his hip when the Stars made that Stanley Cup Final, their first in 20 years. After hip surgery and an arthroscopic procedure on his knee, there was a grueling rehab that kept him out for all but three games at the end of the 2020-21 season and made him change how he played.

“You get slotted where you’re slotted and you just want to contribute as much as you can, wheth-

## Scoreboard

### Playoffs

CONFERENCE FINALS  
(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)  
EASTERN CONFERENCE  
Carolina vs. Florida

Thursday: at Carolina  
Saturday: at Carolina, AFN-Atlantic, 2 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT  
Monday: at Florida, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Tuesday CET; 9 a.m. Tuesday JKT  
Tuesday: at Florida, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Thursday CET; 9 a.m. Thursday JKT  
x-Friday, May 26: at Carolina  
x-Sunday, May 28: at Florida  
x-Tuesday, May 30: at Carolina  
WESTERN CONFERENCE  
Vegas vs. Dallas  
Friday: at Vegas, AFN-Sports2, 2:30 a.m. Saturday CET; 9:30 a.m. Saturday JKT  
Sunday: at Vegas, AFN-Sports2, 9 p.m. Sunday CET; 4 a.m. Monday JKT  
Tuesday: at Dallas, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT  
Thursday, May 25: at Dallas, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Friday CET; 9 a.m. Friday JKT  
x-Saturday, May 27: at Vegas  
x-Monday, May 29: at Dallas  
x-Wednesday, May 31: at Vegas

er it’s first PP (power play), no PP, first line, fourth line,” Seguin said. “When you have a team like this, it’s exciting. It’s always a lot easier because you’re so deep and you can kind of play anywhere.”

DeBoer said he never looked at salary, ego or what they did in the past, and instead coached every player like he’d want to be coached. Dallas is the fourth different team he’s taken to the conference finals.

“The teams you have a chance to win with, those guys accept that coaching, they want that coaching, they’re willing to to buy into to that,” DeBoer said. “In the places I’ve been where those key guys have pushed back, you know you’re usually not winning.”

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## WNBA/PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

# Griner, Mercury set to tip off new season

By DAVID BRANDT  
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Brittney Griner's life and career path have taken a sharp turn over the past 18 months following a nearly 10-month detainment in Russia on drug-related charges that ended with a prisoner swap in December.

To say the Phoenix Mercury center's journey has been complicated would be an understatement.

Now, the next chapter will be for everyone to see how good a basketball player she still is.

The early returns suggest Griner, 31, remains a formidable talent, even if she's understandably rusty. She scored 10 points and grabbed three rebounds in her only preseason game against the Los Angeles Sparks on Friday, flashing her considerable skills but also showing there's some work to do.

"Coach keeps telling me to give myself grace," Griner said. "But that's hard."

The WNBA regular season begins Friday.

With all that has happened off the court, it's easy to forget Griner had arguably her best season in 2021. She finished second in the MVP voting after averaging 20.5 points, 9.5 rebounds and nearly two blocks per game. She was a major reason the Mercury reached the WNBA Finals before losing to the Chicago Sky.

Mercury coach Vanessa Nygaard said she has been amazed



MATT YORK/AP

**Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner is introduced before a preseason game against the L.A. Sparks on May 12 in Phoenix. Griner is making her WNBA return after spending most of last year detained in Russia.**

by Griner's ability to bounce back from an experience few athletes could fathom.

"This is a person who has been off for more than a year and she's been battling really hard, and I thought she did some really good stuff," Nygaard said. "I thought she did some great stuff, she's super engaged, and it was a really joyful day for her and her family."

Even though Griner said she

had "a few more cobwebs than I thought" after her first preseason game, there's little doubt her return is a huge positive for the Mercury. Without Griner last season, they finished with a 15-21 record.

"I love playing with BG (Brittney Griner) and who wouldn't," Mercury guard Moriah Jefferson said after last Friday's preseason game. "She's such a big body and she's a great teammate off the

court and she had a great game. She came out aggressive and had a lot of boards and put-backs with some good finishes.

"It was nice for her to be back, and we'll be better for next game."

Of course, Griner's play on the basketball court is just one part of here comeback. She'll tour the country this season playing WNBA games with the Mercury — making stops in Los Angeles,

Dallas, Indianapolis and Washington, D.C.

The exposure that came from being detained in Russia for having vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage has given Griner a platform to advocate for other Americans being detained abroad. She was already an LGBTQ+ activist since publicly coming out in 2013 and became the first openly gay athlete to be sponsored by Nike.

Griner announced in April that she is working with Bring Our Families Home, a campaign formed last year by the family members of American hostages and wrongful detainees held overseas. She said her team has been in contact with the family of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who is being detained in Russia on espionage charges.

It's expected that WNBA fans will be widely supportive of Griner — she got a standing ovation before the Mercury's preseason game last week — and Nygaard said navigating the media hoopla will be a welcome challenge.

"I'm anticipating the first time we go everywhere, it'll be the 'BG' game, and it'll be a thing," Nygaard said. "So maybe we have to get through all the cities, and then it'll be more normal. But it's going to be a great tour. She's going to go into a bunch of spaces where people are really excited and supportive."

## Fan support for Mickelson remains strong after LIV split

By WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

PITTSFORD, N.Y. — New York's love affair with Phil Mickelson still appears to run deep. No matter the part of the state. No matter what tour he calls home.

A year after the six-time major champion left the PGA Tour to become the de facto face of the Saudi-backed LIV Golf league — a move that kickstarted multiple lawsuits and a sometimes bitter war of words among the sport's biggest stars — Mickelson strolled around Oak Hill ahead of this week's PGA Championship as if nothing from his surprising triumph at Kiawah in 2021 has changed other than perhaps his seemingly ever-shrinking waistline.

Wearing a hooded burgundy sweatshirt and his trademark aviator sunglasses, Mickelson made a leisurely tour of the front nine with fellow LIV competitors and PGA Tour defectors Dustin Johnson, Harold Varner III and Talor Gooch ahead of Thursday's opening round.

This is the state that serenaded him with "Happy Birthday" dur-



SETH WENIG/AP

**Phil Mickelson watches a tee shot Wednesday during a practice round for the PGA Championship at Oak Hill Country Club in Pittsford, N.Y.**

ing the final round of the 2002 U.S. Open at Bethpage Black as he tried to chase down Tiger Woods for his first major; celebrated when he won his first PGA title at Baltusrol in 2005 — northern New Jersey essentially counts, right? — and groaned when he double-bogeyed the 18th at Winged Foot to cost himself the 2006 U.S. Open.

The gallery drifted three-to-four deep around the tee boxes

and greens, with various iterations of "Phil" and "Go Phil!" following Mickelson as he tried to get a gauge on a slightly revamped East Course that he's come to know pretty well over the last three decades.

There were hits and misses. An approach shot from the middle of the fairway on the par-4 second hole caromed into a greenside bunker. Minutes later, he feath-

ered his tee shot on the treacherous 230-yard par-3 third hole to 10 feet, only to stare in surprise when two practice putts slid low and right of the cup.

At every turn, however, there were throngs of support as the two state troopers tasked with following the foursome did their best to duck out of the frame as fans pulled out their phones to capture Mickelson's every move.

It was a scene reminiscent of his stunning performance in South Carolina two years ago, when he fended off Brooks Koepka and Louis Oosthuizen to become the first 50-something to capture one of golf's four majors.

Mickelson bailed on a chance to defend his PGA title last year at Southern Hills, part of the initial fallout of comments in which he said he was fine aligning with LIV Golf in an effort to put pressure on the PGA Tour.

Three weeks later, he teed it up with LIV outside London.

Now he's seemingly entrenched on the upstart tour while calling out entities like the PGA Tour, the PGA of America and the USGA for practices he believes could ex-

clude LIV players from opportunities to compete in majors like the PGA and the U.S. Open.

Remove the rhetoric, however, and Mickelson can still bring it. He put together a stunning final round 7-under 65 at Augusta National to charge up the leaderboard and tie for second behind Jon Rahm at the Masters.

The noise around the LIV/PGA Tour rift seems to have calmed a bit in western New York. Rahm, the world's No. 1-ranked player, said he hoped to play a practice round with Mickelson at some point. It didn't work out this week.

Maybe the nearly three-hour trip around the front nine with Johnson, Varner and Gooch was Mickelson's way of trying to give some LIV colleagues some pointers on a course he knows well.

The calls of "Phil!" persisted as he made his way toward the parking lot, urging those he missed to try to grab him later in the week.

Minutes later, Mickelson did a little bit of stretching then hopped into the massive SUV idling in his reserved parking space before zooming away, eyes fixated on the road ahead, not the road behind.



NBA PLAYOFFS



Miami Heat forward Jimmy Butler drives to the basket against Boston Celtics guard Malcolm Brogdon in the first half of Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals Wednesday night in Boston.

Heat rally, beat Celtics in Game 1 of East finals

BY KYLE HIGHTOWER  
*Associated Press*

BOSTON — The Miami Heat needed a calming presence following a sluggish start to their latest conference finals showdown with the Boston Celtics.

Jimmy Butler provided that and a lot more.

Butler scored 35 points, including 20 after halftime, and the Heat rallied in the second half to beat the Celtics 123-116 in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals on Wednesday night.

He said his teammates have given him confidence.

“I’m playing at an incredible level because they are allowing me to do so,” Butler said. “They are not putting a limit on my game. They are trusting me with the ball, on the defensive end. I think that’s what any basketball player wants.”

Miami trailed by nine at the half before turning it around with a franchise playoff-record 46 points in the third and outscoring Boston 66-50 in the final two quarters. It was Butler’s fifth game with 30 or more points this postseason and he added seven assists, six steals and five rebounds.

“One of the premier two-way basketball players of this association. ... That’s what we needed.” Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. “Down the stretch, Jimmy was able to do everything we needed — as a scorer and as a facilitator.”

**Scoreboard**

**Conference finals**  
(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)

**Eastern Conference**  
**Miami 1, Boston 0**

**Wednesday:** Miami 123, Boston 116  
**Friday:** at Boston, AFN-Sports, 2:30 a.m.  
**Saturday CET:** 9:30 a.m. **Saturday JKT**  
**Sunday:** at Miami, AFN-Sports, 2:30 a.m.  
**Monday CET:** 9:30 a.m. **Monday JKT**  
**Tuesday:** at Miami, AFN-Sports, 2:30 a.m. **Wednesday CET:** 9:30 a.m. **Wednesday JKT**

**x-Thursday, May 25:** at Boston  
**x-Saturday, May 27:** at Miami  
**x-Monday, May 29:** at Boston

**Western Conference**  
**Denver 1, L.A. Lakers 0**

**Denver 132, L.A. Lakers 126**  
**Thursday:** at Denver  
**Saturday:** at L.A. Lakers, AFN-Sports 2:30 a.m. **Sunday CET:** 9:30 a.m. **Sunday JKT**  
**Monday:** at L.A. Lakers, AFN-Sports, 3:10 a.m. **Tuesday CET:** 10:10 a.m. **Tuesday JKT**  
**x-Wednesday, May 24:** at Denver  
**x-Friday, May 26:** at L.A. Lakers  
**x-Sunday, May 28:** at Denver

Bam Adebayo added 20 points and eight rebounds. Kyle Lowry, Caleb Martin, Gabe Vincent and Max Strus scored 15 points apiece. The Heat went 16 of 31 from the three-point line.

The No. 8-seeded Heat have opened all three playoff series with road victories. Game 2 is Friday night in Boston.

Jayson Tatum led the Celtics with 30 points, but didn’t take a shot in the fourth quarter. Jaylen Brown finished with 22 points and nine rebounds. Malcolm Brogdon added 19 points.

Boston is just 4-4 at home during this postseason.

The Celtics, who are at their best when they’re defending and

getting up more shots than their opponents, were 10 of 29 from beyond the arc.

“We lost our offensive purpose,” Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said.

The tip-off of the series marked the third time in four seasons that the Heat and Celtics have met in this round. Boston won last year’s matchup in seven games.

Wednesday’s opener felt every bit like a continuation of that most recent meeting. Boston dominated inside early on and led by nine at halftime.

Spoelstra said his team was “more intentional” over the final 24 minutes.

Miami took a page out of the Celtics’ book and used a 13-1 run to erase that gap, tying the game at 78 in the third quarter. During the next timeout, Mazzulla was captured by TV cameras throwing a clipboard in frustration.

Boston couldn’t stop the onslaught and Miami then nudged back in front as Butler penetrated to create opportunities for his teammates.

The Heat outscored the Celtics 46-25 in the period and took a 103-91 lead into the fourth, prompting a few boos from the TD Garden crowd.

“We are just playing really good basketball,” Butler said. “More than anything, we are staying together through the good and through the bad.”

Boston can’t hold edge on once-fearsome floor

BY JIMMY GOLEN  
*Associated Press*

BOSTON — Once so prodigious on their parquet floor, the Boston Celtics can’t seem to squeeze out a home-court advantage during these playoffs.

The franchise that once went 40-1 at home over an entire season fell to .500 at the TD Garden in the playoffs this year with a 123-116 loss to the Miami Heat on Wednesday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals.

“I don’t know. I don’t know why,” said Celtics star Jayson Tatum, who scored 30 points. “You’ve still got to play the game. You’ve still got to make plays, regardless of whether you’re at home or away. The court is the same: There’s one ball, three refs and two baskets.

“I don’t have an exact answer why we’re .500 at home,” he said. “But we’ve got to be better.”

The Celtics, seeded second, squandered the home-court advantage they earned by finishing 13 games ahead of Miami in the regular season. Not that it matters: The Celtics weren’t able to hold it in their previous playoff series, needing two road wins against Atlanta and Philadelphia to advance.

Boston was 32-9 at home in the regular season, tied for the best in the East. On Wednesday night, the Celtics rode a spirited crowd to a 13-point second-quarter lead, but

Miami outscored them 46-25 in the third quarter and the fans responded with boos.

Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said he didn’t think the problem was where they were playing as much as how they were playing.

“I don’t think that has anything to do with it,” he said. “We won three of the four quarters. We got away from who we are in third quarter, whether it’s home or away.”

Teams used to fear visiting the original Boston Garden, with stories about cold showers in the visitors’ locker room and dead spots in the floor that only the Celtics knew to avoid. The 1986 Celtics only lost one regular-season game there, and then went 10-0 at home in the playoffs to claim their third NBA title in six seasons.

That building is gone, replaced in 1995. The new one has served the Celtics just fine — they won an unprecedented 17th NBA title on their famous parquet floor in 2008 — but it doesn’t seem to inspire the same fear in opponents.

“We just go out there and try to win basketball games,” Heat guard Kyle Lowry said. “At the end of the day we are the 8 seed, so we are on the road. We’ve got to go out there and try to win games on the road. We don’t have the advantage of having four games at home, so we’ve got to go out there and try to win games on the road.”



Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum stands on the court during the second half of Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals against the Miami Heat in Boston on Wednesday. The Heat won 123-116.



# SPORTS



**Road warriors**  
Butler, Miami open East finals with win in Boston » **NBA playoffs, Page 31**

NHL PLAYOFFS

Stars center Tyler Seguin, front, and Roope Hintz celebrate Seguin's goal against Minnesota in Game 5 of their first-round playoff series.

PHOTOS BY TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

# Changing their focus

Benn, Seguin have different roles as 30-somethings

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS  
*Associated Press*

Jamie Benn and Tyler Seguin were regularly among the NHL's top scorers when they first started playing together in Dallas a decade ago.

Now 30-something forwards, captain Benn and six-time All-Star Seguin are far removed from skating together on the top line, or even leading the Stars in scoring while having the two biggest contracts on the roster. Their roles have changed and they have played a little less this season on different lines, but that plan has certainly worked out well for the players — and the team that is in the Western Conference finals.

"You've seen the effect of it with the season we've had, directly on our standings, directly on our scoring, directly on the consistency of their seasons," first-year Stars coach Pete De-



DeBoer

Boer said Wednesday. "We're not a passive stand-around team, so you're expending a lot of energy to play the way we want to play. And I think that's benefited our team game, too, because they have that energy to do that."

Benn again played all 82 regular-season games, with 33 goals and 78 points for his best totals since 2017-18, even with an average ice time of 15:47 that was his lowest since his 2009-10 rookie season. He had 18 goals and 28 assists playing the same number of games and nearly a minute more per game last season.

SEE FOCUS ON PAGE 29



Stars left wing Jamie Benn played in all 82 regular-season games this season, scoring 33 goals and tallying 78 points.

**Yankees pitcher Germán handed 10-game suspension** » MLB, Page 27