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CONTINGENCY EDITION

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2021

Free to Deployed Areas



First stirrings of resistance to Taliban's rule emerge

By EZZATULLAH MEHRDAD
AND SUDARSAN RAGHAVAN
The Washington Post

KABUL — Groups of armed Afghans on Friday attacked the Taliban, driving Afghanistan's new rulers out of three northern districts, the first assault against the Islamist militants since they swept into Kabul and seized control of the government.

Local anti-Taliban commanders claimed in interviews they had killed as many as 30 of the group's fighters and captured 20 in the takeover of the districts in Baghlan province, just over 100 miles north of the capital. Former Afghan service members were joined in the fight, they said, by local civilians. Images shared online showed celebrations as the red, green and black Afghan national flag — rather than the white flag of the Taliban — was raised over government buildings.

"As long as we are alive, we do not accept the Taliban's rule."

Sediqullah Shuja
Ex-Afghan soldier

"We have ignited something that is historic in Afghanistan," said Sediqullah Shuja, 28, a former Afghan soldier who took part in Friday's uprising. "Taliban fighters had armored vehicles, but people threw stones at Taliban fighters and drove them out."

"As long as we are alive," he said, "we do not accept the Taliban's rule."

Friday's attack is the latest sign of defiance toward the Taliban,

SEE EMERGE ON PAGE 6

Waiting for a reprieve

Potential Islamic State threats force changes to US evacuations at Kabul airport

By AHMAD SEIR, RAHIM FAIEZ,
KATHY GANNON AND LOLITA BALDOR
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Potential Islamic State threats against Americans in Afghanistan are forcing the U.S. military to develop new ways to get evacuees to the airport in Kabul, a senior U.S. official said Saturday, adding a new

complication to the already chaotic efforts to get people out of the country after its swift fall to the Taliban.

The official said that small groups of Americans and possibly other civilians will be given specific instructions on what to do, including movement to transit points where they can be gathered up by the military. The official spoke

on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.

The changes come as the U.S. Embassy issued a new security warning Saturday telling citizens not to travel to the Kabul airport without individual instruction from a U.S. govern-

SEE AWAIT ON PAGE 6

U.S. Air Force security forces maintain a security cordon outside a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft in support of Operation Allies Refuge at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Friday.

TAYLOR CRUL/AP

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Stocks end higher, but still post weekly losses

Associated Press

Technology companies led stocks broadly higher on Wall Street Friday, though the gains were not enough to erase the market's losses from earlier in the week.

The S&P 500 index rose 0.8%, but still posted a weekly loss of 0.6% after two weeks of gains. Even so, the benchmark index is less than 1% from the all-time high it set Monday.

More than 80% of S&P 500 companies notched gains, including

tech sector stocks. Microsoft rose 2.6% and chipmaker Nvidia gained 5.1% for the biggest gain in the index.

A mix of companies that rely on consumer spending and communications stocks also made up a big share of the rally. Energy stocks also rose, despite another decline in the price of U.S. crude oil. Treasury yields mostly rose.

Investors turned cautious this week following some disappointing economic reports on retail sales, housing and consumer sen-

timent.

Escalating coronavirus infections across the U.S. and around the globe due to the highly contagious delta variant have also given traders reason to pause with the market near all-time highs.

The S&P 500 rose 35.87 points to 4,441.67. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 225.96 points, or 0.7%, to 35,120.08. The Nasdaq composite picked up 172.87 points, or 1.2%, to 14,714.66. The Dow and Nasdaq also posted weekly losses.

EXCHANGE RATES		
Military rates		
Euro costs (Aug. 23)	\$1.14	
Dollar buys (Aug. 23)	0.8348	
British pound (Aug. 23)	\$1.33	
Japanese yen (Aug. 23)	107.00	
South Korean won (Aug. 23)	1147.00	
Commercial rates		
Bahrain(Dinar)	0.3770	
Britain (Pound)	1.3628	
Canada (Dollar)	1.2860	
China (Yuan)	6.5002	
Denmark (Krone)	6.3682	
Egypt (Pound)	15.7004	
Euro	0.8564	
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7903	
Hungary (Forint)	299.85	
Israel (Shekel)	3.2409	
Japan (Yen)	109.84	
Kuwait(Dinar)	0.3011	
Norway (Krone)	9.0455	
Philippines (Peso)	50.31	
Poland (Zloty)	3.93	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7501	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3625	
South Korea (Won)	1181.33	
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9174	
Thailand (Baht)	33.35	
Turkey (NewLira)	8.5070	
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)		
INTEREST RATES		
Prime rate	3.25	
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75	
Federal funds market rate	0.09	
3-month bill	0.06	
30-year bond	1.88	

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MILITARY



U.S. Navy

The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Anzio departs Norfolk Naval Station in March 2015. To pay for the ships and unmanned vessels the Navy hopes to build over the next few years, it wants to decommission seven cruisers. One of them is the Anzio.

Battle brewing over future of Navy cruisers, including 5 in Norfolk

By DAVE RESS
The Daily Press

NORFOLK, Va. — To pay for the ships and unmanned vessels the Navy hopes to build over the next few years, it wants to decommission seven cruisers, a move the two Virginia representatives on the House Armed Services Committee's sea-power panel plan to contest.

Cruisers have a critical role in the U.S. Navy, says Democrat Rep. Elaine Luria, whose 2nd District includes Virginia Beach and parts of Norfolk. Luria spent some of her time in the Navy as executive officer of the cruiser USS Anzio.

Cruisers serve as the air defense center for carrier strike groups, with a team of sailors responsible for tracking aircraft and missile movements around the group. That means figuring out within minutes if a signal on radar or other sensors is a threat, and if so, how to block it.

In addition, cruisers carry more guided missiles than other ships, with 120 cells compared to 90 for guided missile destroyers and 24 for carriers, Luria said. Five of the cruisers in question are based in Norfolk.

Cruisers' weapons include the Sea Sparrow anti-aircraft and anti-missile system and the long range Tomahawks that strike land targets, like the Syrian chemical weapons facilities the Navy took out in 2017, Luria said.

"There's really nothing that will be able to replace them in the next five years," she said.

The Navy's argument comes down to money.

The cruisers are aging — the warships slated for decommissioning were delivered between 1988 and 1993 — and Vice Adm. Jim Kilby, deputy chief of naval operations, told the sea-power subcommittee earlier this summer that it would cost nearly \$2.8

billion to retain all seven in service over the next two years.

The price tag to modernize just USS Anzio and Hue City is about \$1.5 billion, he said.

Earlier this year, repairs to Vella Gulf kept it from joining the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower for two and a half months, he said. The cruiser had to return to Norfolk just days after deploying with the strike group in February when crew members found a fuel oil leak while operating in heavy seas.

In mid-March, while at sea to test repairs to its fuel oil system, crew members found another leak, requiring a return to port to replace a deteriorated tank top. In early April, as the crew prepared to head out to sea again, they discovered bits of metal and welding slag in the lube oil system. Cleaning and flushing it took another two weeks,

"All that, in my mind, has to go into the mix when we factor the availability and reliability of those ships," Kilby said. "Those missile tubes will only count if they're underway alongside the carrier."

The sea-power subcommittee has formally approved the Navy budget that calls for decommissioning the seven cruisers, comprised of the Norfolk-based USS Anzio, Hue City, Monterey, San Jacinto and Vella Gulf as well as a cruiser based in San Diego and another in Pearl Harbor. More than 1,500 men and women serve on the Norfolk ships.

But the real debate begins next month, when the full committee begins digging into, and revising, the budget submitted by the Navy — the process Capitol Hill calls "mark-up" — and the fate of the cruisers will be a key topic, said Luria, who is vice-chair of the committee.

That's when Republican Rep. Rob Wittman, whose 1st District includes James City and Westmoreland, expects to raise his con-

cerns about cruiser decommissioning.

China's increasingly aggressive posture in the western Pacific is a big worry, said Wittman, who is the most senior Republican on the sea-powers subcommittee. U.S. Navy cruisers could be a big help in lowering the temperature there.

He thinks the Navy's whole budgeting approach — which it has tagged "divest to invest" — needs a harder look.

The underlying idea, from the Navy's point of view, is that using funds to maintain older ships will slow the pace of developing the new weapons and technologies it needs, particularly unmanned vessels.

Luria worries that, just as with the rising costs and postponed deployment of the carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, the Navy may be committing to new technologies before it, and Congress, know how much time and money will be needed to launch the ships that will replace the cruisers.

Slowing the pace of funding for new technology so that it is more in step with the pace of development would free up funds to keep at least some of the targeted cruisers in service.

So, too, would a hard look at the practice of splitting the defense budget into thirds to be equally shared by the Army, Air Force and Navy, Luria said. The shift of strategic concern from terrorism to the threats posed by Russia and China suggest the Navy and Air Force may need a larger share.

And, she said, it is hard to see how to boost the fleet to a total of 355 ships — a goal set just a few years back — if the Navy decommissions more ships over the next couple of years than it plans to build.

"It just doesn't make sense to decommission ships when you want to get to 355," she said.

18 students leave US Naval Academy for violating code

By LAUREN LUMPKIN
AND DANIELLE
DOUGLAS-GABRIEL
The Washington Post

Eighteen midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., have been expelled or resigned following an investigation into cheating on a physics exam in December 2020, officials said Friday.

More than 650 midshipmen took the final exam that month for General Physics I, which was administered through an online platform. The students were given written and verbal instructions that said they could not use outside websites or sources to complete the test, according to a statement from the academy.

Vice Adm. Sean Buck, the academy's superintendent, initiated an investigation after learning midshipmen may have used outside sources, including other websites, during the exam, officials said.

Academy leaders were also made aware that some midshipmen used an anonymous chat platform to discuss the exam after they finished.

"Character development is an ongoing process and midshipmen must make the choice to live honorably each day and earn the trust that comes with a commission in the Navy or Marine Corps," Buck said in a statement Friday. "This incident demonstrates that we must place an increased focus on character and integrity within the entire brigade."

Despite efforts by the physics department to prevent cheating — including requiring midshipmen to submit their calculations from the test on a sheet of paper — 105 midshipmen were identified to have probably accessed unauthorized resources during the test.

Naval officials withheld the names of those involved but said 61% of them are varsity athletes and 83% are men. Five of the midshipmen were at the top quartile of their class, while 66 were at the bottom. The majority of the students were sophomores.

"The biggest vulnerability identified was inadequate proctoring," officials said in the statement. The academy now "strongly advises" instructors to use paper-based, in-person tests and use browser security programs during online exams.

Eighty-two midshipmen were found to have violated the

school's honor code, and were retained in the brigade with sanctions and entered into a five-month remediation program, according to officials. Four other students were found not in violation and one is awaiting adjudication by the Brigade Honor Board. As the investigation proceeded, some students chose to submit resignations while others were expelled.

The entire brigade of midshipmen conducted a day-long conference in April that included "intensive training and discussions on honor," officials said, adding "there will be a renewed focus on character and professional development throughout this academic year."

Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, D-Md., who chairs the Naval Academy's board of visitors, issued a statement supporting the findings of the investigation. The board oversees matters related to discipline, financial affairs and curriculum at the academy.

"The Academy's Honor Concept is clear and anyone who violates it must be held accountable," Ruppersberger said Friday. "Midshipmen must earn the privilege to study at one of our nation's most prestigious institutions and their character and conduct must be worthy at all times."

Students who attend the Naval Academy receive a full scholarship in return for five years of active duty service upon graduation.

Midshipmen who are discharged or resign before their junior year are not required to repay the academy for their education or serve in the enlisted ranks.

The Naval Academy first announced its investigation in December, around the time the U.S. Military Academy at West Point accused 73 cadets of cheating on a freshman calculus exam.

The elite academy allowed many cadets to repeat a year, sparking a backlash from alumni who accused the school of being too lenient.

This is not the first time the Naval Academy has been tarnished by a cheating scandal. In 1994, then-Navy Secretary John H. Dalton ordered 24 midshipmen expelled for cheating on an electrical engineering exam.

Some students were accused of buying and selling copies of the exam, while others were charged with writing formulas on index cards used during the test.

AFGHANISTAN

First Afghan evacuees arrive at Ramstein

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
AND KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Hundreds of evacuees from Afghanistan, including many families with children, arrived at Ramstein Air Base from Qatar on Friday after a harrowing journey fleeing the Taliban's takeover.

The first of three aircraft carrying the evacuees — two U.S. Air Force C-17s and a British commercial jet — flew over Kaiserslautern at around 7 p.m. on the approach to Ramstein's airfield.

Ramstein has the capacity to support up to 5,000 evacuees, and more are expected in the coming days, base officials said. The State Department will determine where the evacuees will go next, but most are expected to travel to the United States in the next few days once they are vetted and medically cleared, officials said.

Evacuees seem to be in "good condition," said Brig. Gen. Josh Olson, the 86th Airlift Wing commander. "They look exhausted. They look very tired" and are traveling with "very little," he said. "But seeing the children and the families coming off with huge smiles, it warms your heart."

An Air Force imam, a Muslim chaplain assigned to Ramstein, was one of the first to greet evacuees, officials said.

He tells them "they are on an Air Force base in Germany" and that "we're going to take care of you, this is a safe place," said Lt. Col. Will Powell, an 86th Airlift Wing spokesman.

Airmen and volunteers from the Red Cross and the USO were on hand to deliver bottles of water to the evacuees as they stepped from a bus that picked them up on the flight line. Evacuees, most of whom were wearing face masks, received a medical screening due to coronavirus concerns, officials said.

The vetting process includes scanning their information against several databases to determine whether they're "friend or foe," Olson said. Keeping the base community secure as well as the evacuees safe is a top priority, he said.

Evacuees were to sleep on military cots set up in hangars and large tents erected on the flight line. Portable toilets and showers were also brought in.

More flights bringing evacuees were expected throughout the night and in the coming days, Olson said.



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

A boy steps off the bus at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Friday, after arriving on a U.S. military flight from Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.



Brig. Gen. Josh Olson, 86th Airlift Wing commander at Ramstein Air Base, speaks to reporters on Friday, about how Ramstein is prepared to temporarily support thousands of evacuees from Afghanistan.

So far, most of the evacuees are Afghans, Olson said. The first flights to arrive Friday departed from Qatar but evacuees will be arriving from "a myriad of places," Olson said.

The base also expects to receive American and German citizens who have evacuat-

ed Afghanistan, Olson said.

"Right now we're expecting about 5,000 but we will surge according to the needs (so) that we can help and support as many people as we can," he said.

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Many of the hundreds of evacuees from Afghanistan who arrived were families with children.

Biden: US troops gathered Americans to take to airport

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

U.S. troops left Kabul's international airport on Thursday to gather U.S. citizens trapped in the large, chaotic crowds just outside the airfield's walls, President Joe Biden said Friday, vowing to provide "every resource necessary" to get Americans out of Afghanistan.

"Let me be clear, any American who wants to come home, we will get you home," Biden said in his second address to the nation since Afghanistan's near-total

fall to the Taliban last weekend.

The president said American troops helped 169 U.S. citizens enter Hamid Karzai International Airport, the last U.S.-held ground in Afghanistan, after they were stuck for hours in the crowds of thousands outside its gates on Thursday. It was the first known time American troops had moved outside the perimeter of the airport since the Taliban captured the city Sunday.

Biden indicated more U.S. troops could leave the relative

safety of the airport to help Americans stranded in Kabul, if necessary. That appeared to be a change in policy for the administration after Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters



Biden

he had no capability to send American forces into Kabul.

But the president also said he was not aware of specific reports

of Taliban fighters hindering the passage of American passport holders through the city, citing an agreement U.S. military commanders at the airport struck with Taliban commanders in Kabul with whom they are regularly speaking.

Allowing Americans and U.S.-allied Afghans with proper paperwork through to the airport was in the Taliban's "best interest," Biden said. He noted, as top Pentagon officials have repeatedly said this week, the Taliban had been warned any violent in-

terference with the evacuation operation would be "met with a swift and forceful response."

Pentagon officials have acknowledged U.S. fighter jets have been circling Kabul in case commanders need to order a quick response.

The president said he had spoken to those commanders on the ground Friday, during a situation room huddle with his top national security advisers and "made it clear to them we will get them whatever they need to get the job done."

AFGHANISTAN

Afghan news hits personal chord with DOD leaders

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For senior military and Pentagon leaders, this week's news was profoundly personal.

The photos and videos pouring out of Afghanistan hit a nerve, and triggered searingly vivid flashbacks to battles fought, troops lost and tears shed during their own deployments there. And in a response shaped by their memories and experiences in the war, they urged troops to check in on their buddies, talk to each other and seek help and solace if they need it.

The top two Pentagon leaders made it clear that the scenes unfolding in Afghanistan, as citizens frantically tried to get out of the country and escape the new Taliban rule, were tough for them to watch. And they knew that the visions of Afghans struggling to get on flights — so desperate that some clung to an aircraft as it lifted off — were painful for troops to see.

"All of this is very personal for me. This is a war that I fought in and led. I know the country, I know the people, and I know those who fought alongside me," said Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, a retired four-star Army general who served as a commander in Afghanistan in the early years and then led U.S. Central Command overseeing the Middle East wars as his final post from 2013-16. "We have a moral obligation to help those who helped us. And I feel the urgency deeply."

Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commanded troops in Afghanistan and

has talked often about how deeply he felt the loss of each soldier under his watch.

"For more than 20 years, we have prevented an attack on the U.S. homeland. 2,448 lost our lives, 20,722 were wounded in action, and many others suffered the unseen wounds of war. To each of them, I want you to know, personally, that your service matters," said Milley. "As the Secretary said, for both he and I, this is personal. And I know it's personal for each and every one of you."

Austin said troops have a wide range of views on the issue and he urged them to work through it in their own way. "We need to respect that and we need to give one another the time and space to help do it," he said.

Across the military, many senior officers have done tours in Afghanistan. They led troops in battle. They trained Afghan forces. And they relied heavily on the Afghan interpreters now at risk of violence from the Taliban, and begging for help to leave the country.

In recent days, those leaders have talked privately with their staffs and sent heartfelt public messages to their forces who they know are struggling with a range of emotions: frustration with the Taliban takeover after two decades of blood and loss; fears that Afghans they worked with won't get out safely; and questions about whether their time in the country mattered.

On Friday morning, Gen. Richard Clarke, head of U.S. Special Operations Command, addressed his entire headquarters staff about the situation in Afghanistan.



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, joined by Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley, left, glances up at the start of a meeting with Qatar Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Khalid Al Attiyah at the Pentagon in Washington, on Thursday.

Clarke, who has deployed to Afghanistan several times, has commandos who have done multiple tours in the last two decades and he noted this is an emotional time for them. Speaking over the intercom, he pressed them to reach out to their battle buddies and seek other resources if they need someone to talk to.

In a blunt letter to his force this week, Gen. David Berger, the Marine Corps commandant, said now is the time to come together. "You should take pride in your service — it gives meaning to the sacrifice of all Marines who served, including those whose sacrifice was ultimate," said the letter, co-signed by Marine Sgt. Maj. Troy Black.

Berger, who deployed to Afghanistan in 2012 as commander of the 1st Marine Division, has also made sure his Marines have information to give interpreters they worked with in Afghanistan who are asking for help evacuating.

And he noted in his message that Marines may be struggling with a simple question: "Was it all worth it?" The answer, he and Black said, is yes.

Lt. Gen. Jim Slife, commander

of Air Force Special Operations Command, went to his Facebook page to post a note to his commando forces who have gone in and out of Afghanistan for the past 20 years. And he recalled the first troops he lost in battle.

"From the very beginning to the very present, I have been responsible for sending countless Airmen into harm's way there, not all of whom returned to their families," said Slife. "In November 2003, I sent home the remains of my teammates and friends in the aftermath of the first fatalities I experienced as a commander. In May of 2011, we killed Osama bin Laden. Highs and lows ... lows and highs ... I've felt it all."

He warned of many hard days and years ahead as troops reflect on their Afghanistan experiences while dealing with physical, psychological and moral wounds.

"If, like me, you find yourself trying to put your own experiences into some context which will allow you to move forward positively and productively, I urge you to talk about it," and seek out a wide range of resources for help, he said.

Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army, penned a letter to his personnel offering solace. Their sacrifices, he said, will be a lasting legacy of honor. And he also pleads with troops to seek help and reach out to their comrades.

"I'd ask that you check in on your teammates as well as our Soldiers for Life, who may be struggling with the unfolding events," said McConville, who commanded troops in Afghanistan. At the bottom of the letter he scrawled in marker, "Proud to serve with you!"

Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, sent a message to sailors with a similar request.

"Reach out to those who may be struggling, and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to a grateful nation," he said. "I want to be very clear, your service was not in vain, and it made a difference."

More than 50 organizations signed a letter offering help to those in need, and said people can call the Veterans Crisis Line and Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.

Taliban took Afghanistan but face money troubles

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Taliban face a frontal challenge in cementing control of Afghanistan: Money.

Despite their dominant military blitz over the past week, the Taliban lack access to billions of dollars from their central bank and the International Monetary Fund that would keep the country running during a turbulent shakeup. Those funds are largely controlled by the U.S. and international institutions, a possible leverage point as tense evacuations proceed from the airport in the capital of Kabul. Tens of thousands of people remain to be evacuated ahead of the United States' Aug. 31 deadline to withdraw its troops from the country.

But the Taliban also do not currently have

institutional structures to receive the money — a sign of the challenges it might confront as it tries to govern an economy that has urbanized and tripled in size since they were last in power two decades ago. The shortfall could lead to an economic crisis that would only fuel a deeper humanitarian one for the roughly 36 million Afghans expected to stay in the country.

"If they don't have jobs, they don't get fed," said Anthony Cordesman, who advised the U.S. government on Afghan strategy and works at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The Taliban has to find an answer."

The stranded funds are one of the few potential sources of pressure that the U.S. gov-

ernment has over the Taliban. But Cordesman added, "To have a pressure point, you have to be willing to negotiate in ways the Taliban can accept."

As of now, the Taliban government cannot access almost all of the Afghanistan central bank's \$9 billion in reserves, most of which is held by the New York Federal Reserve. Afghanistan was also slated to access about \$450 million on Aug. 23 from the International Monetary Fund, which has effectively blocked the release because of a "lack of clarity" regarding the recognition of a new Afghan government.

While the money would make it easier for the Taliban to govern, government officials have indicated that it's unclear who would be

the points of contact within Afghanistan on financial issues. President Joe Biden conceded that he doesn't know whether the Taliban want to be part of the broader global economy — which means it might be comfortable going without any funds.

Even if the Taliban could get money from the IMF, Douglas Rediker, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, said the process "would take, I think, months at the earliest, if at all." But he also anticipates that the U.S. would find a way to block the release of any money through the IMF system.

"The U.S. still retains a lot of political heft in the global, political and economic systems to twist some arms," Rediker said. "The Taliban are not going to be popular."

AFGHANISTAN

Await:
Abdullah,
Karzai meet
with Taliban

FROM PAGE 1

ment representative. Officials declined to provide more specifics about the ISIS threat but described it as significant, and said there have been no confirmed attacks as yet.

Time is running out ahead of Biden's Aug. 31 deadline to withdraw most remaining U.S. troops, and the president on Friday did not commit to extending it. He faces growing criticism as videos depict pandemonium and occasional violence outside the airport, and as Afghans who fear the Taliban's retaliation send desperate pleas not to be left behind.

Crowds remain outside the Kabul airport's concrete barriers, clutching documents and sometimes stunned-looking children, blocked from flight by coils of razor wire.

Tens of thousands of translators and other Afghan wartime helpers, along with their close family members, are seeking evacuation after the Taliban's shockingly swift takeover of Afghanistan in a little over a week's time. The fall of Kabul marked the final chapter of America's longest war, which began after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who negotiated the religious movement's 2020 peace deal with the U.S., was in Kabul for meetings with the group's leadership, a Taliban official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the news media. Baradar's presence is significant because he has often held talks with former Afghan leaders such as ex-President Hamid Karzai.

Afghan officials familiar with talks held in the capital say the Taliban have said they will not make announcements on their government until the Aug. 31 deadline for the troop withdrawal passes.

Abdullah Abdullah, a senior official in the ousted government, tweeted that he and Karzai met Saturday with Taliban's acting governor for Kabul, who "assured us that he would do everything possible for the security of the people" of the city.

Evacuations continued, though some outgoing flights were far from full because of the airport chaos, Taliban checkpoints and bureaucratic challenges. A German flight on Friday night carried 172 evacuees, but two subsequent flights carried out just seven and eight people, respectively.



KYLIE BARROW, U.S. AIR FORCE/AP

Evacuees rest at a gym in an undisclosed location in the Middle East region on Friday after being evacuated from Kabul, Afghanistan.

On Friday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said around 1,000 people a day were being evacuated amid a "stabilization" at the airport. But on Saturday, a former Royal Marine turned charity director in Afghanistan said the situation was getting worse, not better.

"We can't leave the country because we can't get into the airport without putting our lives at risk," Paul Farthing told BBC radio. "You've all seen the scenes — it is not different today to any other time."

Farthing said he has been told by British authorities that a flight back to the U.K. has a seat for him, but not for the 25 staff from his animal welfare charity Nowzad and their families.

After a backlog at a transit facility in Qatar forced flights from the Kabul international airport to stop for several hours on Friday, the Gulf nation of Bahrain on Saturday announced it was allowing flights to use its transit facilities for the evacuation. The United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, said it would host up to 5,000 Afghans "prior to their departure to other countries."

On Friday, a defense official said about 5,700 people, including about 250 Americans, were flown out of Kabul aboard 16 C-17 transport planes, guarded by a temporary U.S. military deployment that's building to 6,000 troops. On each of the previous two days, about 2,000 people were airlifted.

Officials also confirmed that U.S. military helicopters flew beyond the Kabul airport to scoop up 169 Americans seeking to evacuate. No one knows how many U.S. citizens remain in Afghanistan, but estimates have ranged as high as 15,000.

So far, 13 countries have agreed to host at-risk Afghans at least temporarily, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said. Another 12 have agreed to serve as transit points for evacuees, including Americans and others.

About 300 evacuees arrived Friday night from Qatar at the U.S.

Ramstein Air Base in Germany, one transit point for people being taken to the U.S., the American military said.

"We are tired. We are happy. We are now in a safe country," one Afghan man said upon arrival in Italy with 79 fellow citizens, speaking in a video distributed by that country's defense ministry.

But the growing question for many other Afghans is, where will they finally call home? Already, European leaders who fear a repeat of the 2015 migration crisis are signaling that fleeing Afghans who didn't help Western forces during the war should stay in neighboring countries instead. The desperate scenes of people clinging to aircraft taking off from Kabul's airport have only deepened Europe's anxiety.

Remaining in Afghanistan means adapting to life under the Taliban, who say they seek an "inclusive, Islamic" government, will offer full amnesty to those who worked for the U.S. and the Western-backed government and have become more moderate since they last held power from 1996 to 2001. They also have said — without elaborating — that they will honor women's rights within the norms of Islamic law.

But many Afghans fear a return to the Taliban's harsh rule in the late 1990s, when the group barred women from attending school or working outside the home, banned television and music, chopped off the hands of suspected thieves and held public executions.

"Today, some of my friends went to work at the court and the Taliban didn't let them into their offices. They showed their guns and said, 'You're not eligible to work in this government if you worked in the past one,'" one women's activist in Kabul told The Associated Press on Saturday. She spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

With a Turkish visa but no way to safely reach the airport, the activist described the gap between the Taliban's words and actions "very alarming."

Emerge: Ex-officials,
soldiers join resistance

FROM PAGE 1

ranging from Afghans refusing to fly the white Taliban flag to women protesting to preserve their rights. Together, they illuminate some of the obstacles the Taliban faces as it seeks to form a government deemed acceptable by a broad spectrum of Afghans and by the international community, especially donors.

Whether Friday's attack is a sign of an emerging new military front against the Taliban remains to be seen.

The Taliban is militarily far superior to its earlier incarnation, which ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001 and was toppled following the U.S.-led invasion.

In just 10 days, the Taliban took control of every provincial capital across the nation, despite the Afghan government wielding a U.S.-funded and equipped military, an air force and special commando units. The Taliban seized the arsenals of Afghan army and police units, including American-made weaponry and armored vehicles. Having been humiliated by the Taliban's triumph, there is no appetite in the West to fund an insurgency against their rule.

Taliban officials were not immediately available for comment Friday about events in Baghlan. But a tweet from a pro-Taliban account claimed the clashes killed 15 Taliban and wounded 15, and that the Taliban was betrayed after offering amnesty to locals.

"All those who committed this crime must be killed. The doors of conversation are closed," the tweet read.

Friday's assault to retake the three districts of Puli Hisar, Dih Salah and Bano — which was confirmed by a former defense minister — came after Taliban fighters conducted house-to-house searches in the Andarab valley of the province, local commanders said.

As in most parts of Afghanistan, the Taliban had taken over the districts with little resistance in recent weeks. Shuja said that the local residents had told the Taliban fighters they can govern as long as they don't enter their villages and homes.

So when the Taliban came to conduct searches, former Afghan military servicemen, along with civilians, decided to rise up. They drove out the Taliban in less than a day.

Abdul Rahman, 53, a former commander at Baghlan prison, said he mobilized hundreds of local forces and pushed the Taliban out. He said that the uprising left 30 Taliban fighters dead and 20 in custody — claims that could not be independently verified.

"All people of the valley have

risen up against the Taliban," said Rahman. "We are not afraid of Taliban fighters. We can [fight] as many as they come."

Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, a former defense minister who has called for the arrest of the former president, Ashraf Ghani, confirmed in a tweet that the local forces retook three districts in Baghlan province.

"Resistance is still alive," said Mohammadi, who was an anti-Taliban commander during the group's first stint in power.

On Twitter, Afghans posted photos and videos from the captured districts, including images of rifle-toting fighters congratulating one another on their victory and chanting "Allahu akbar," or "God is great."

Friday's uprising appears unconnected to another anti-Taliban force that emerged in the north: The National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, led by Ahmad Massoud, the son of the late Afghan mujahideen leader, Ahmad Shah Massoud.

The elder Massoud fought the Taliban in the late 1990s from his base in the Panjshir Valley, roughly 90 miles northeast of Kabul. Two days before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, he was assassinated by al-Qaida operatives.

The National Resistance Front appears to be backing former vice president Amrullah Saleh, who is widely believed to be in the Panjshir Valley, the only area in the country not under Taliban control.

Saleh claims he is the legitimate caretaker of Afghanistan after Ghani fled to the United Arab Emirates hours before the Taliban entered Kabul last weekend.

On Wednesday, Ahmad Massoud published an op-ed in The Washington Post seeking U.S. and Western support, arms, ammunition and supplies. He wrote that he is "ready to follow in my father's footsteps, with mujahideen fighters who are prepared to once again take on the Taliban."

Massoud said his forces include former Afghan regular army soldiers and Afghan Special Forces, as well as ordinary Afghans who have responded to his call to join the resistance..

His cause, however, has not been joined by other Afghan leaders who resisted Taliban rule the last time around.

Many have chosen instead to work with the Taliban in hope of creating an inclusive transitional government. Former reconciliation council leader Abdullah Abdullah, former President Hamid Karzai and a powerful warlord, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, have formed a council that seeks a settlement with the Taliban, rather than join the budding insurgency.

VIRUS OUTBREAK



LOUIE LOPEZ/AP

A sick person lies on the floor in a medical facility in Jacksonville, Fla., on Wednesday.

Demand for COVID-19 antibody drugs soars in hard-hit states

Associated Press

People infected with COVID-19 were captured in a photo this week lying on the floor in pain while waiting for antibody infusions at a treatment site set up inside the library in Jacksonville, Fla.

The image has become a vivid illustration of the huge demand for the once-neglected COVID-19 drugs in the states hit hardest by a summer surge of infections being driven by the highly contagious delta variant.

"They were moaning and obviously in a lot of pain. They were miserable," said Louie Lopez, who shot the photograph as he waited for more than two hours to receive the treatment.

Antibody treatments remain one of a handful of therapies that can blunt the worst effects of COVID-19, and they are the only option available to people with mild-

to-moderate cases who aren't yet in the hospital.

They have risen in demand in states seeing a spike in infections, including Florida, Louisiana and Texas, where hospitalizations among the unvaccinated are overwhelming the health care system.

White House officials reported recently that federal shipments of the drugs increased five-fold last month to nearly 110,000 doses, with the vast majority going to states with low vaccination rates.

"They are safe, they are free, they keep people out of the hospital and help keep them alive," said Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, a senior adviser to the White House's COVID-19 response team.

The main drug in use is Regeneron's dual-antibody cocktail, which has been purchased in mass quantities by the U.S. government. It's the same drug former President Donald Trump re-

ceived when he was hospitalized with COVID-19 last October.

The drugs are only recommended for people at the highest risk of progressing to severe COVID-19, but regulators have slowly broadened who can qualify.

With expanded eligibility and skyrocketing caseloads across the country, more people are getting the treatments.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who this week tested positive for the virus and is himself receiving the treatments, said five state-run COVID-19 antibody infusion centers opened last week and that another four would open by Monday.

In Florida, where more than 20,000 people a day on average are testing positive for the virus, the rising demand created a scene at the Jacksonville center that resembled an overwhelmed emergency room.

Fla. schools told to relax mask rules or risk pay

Associated Press

MIAMI — Florida officials are threatening to withhold funds equal to the salaries of school board members if school districts in two counties don't immediately do away with strict mask mandates as the state continues to battle through high hospitalization rates.

School boards in Broward and Alachua counties received a warning Friday from the State Board of Education giving them 48 hours to walk back their decisions to require masks for all students, only exempting those with a doctor's note. Broward County has the second-largest school district in the state.

"We cannot have government officials pick and choose what laws they want to follow," said Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran in an emailed statement. "These are the initial consequences to their intentional refusal to follow state law and state rule to purposefully and willfully violate the rights of parents."

Corcoran said the two districts are violating the Parents' Bill of Rights and a late July executive order by Gov. Ron DeSantis that prompted rules limiting how far districts can go with mask requirements.

The Republican governor has pushed for school districts not to mandate masks for all students, ordering the state's health and

education departments to devise rules so that parents can choose. Corcoran was recommended to the post by DeSantis and appointed by the State Board of Education in 2019.

DeSantis maintains masks can be detrimental to children's development and that younger children simply don't wear masks properly. But board members in the counties of Broward, home to Fort Lauderdale, and Alachua, home to Gainesville, decided not to allow parents to easily opt-out of the mandate as surging cases fueled by the delta variant began straining hospitals.

The state continued to have the highest hospitalization rates in the country, with 16,849 patients with COVID-19 — 3,500 of them in intensive care, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Later Friday, Sarasota County became the sixth school district in the state to adopt a stricter mask policy.

Two other school districts — Hillsborough and Palm Beach counties — had originally started the school year allowing parents to easily opt-out of wearing masks, but tightened their measures this week.

And the school board of the state's largest district in Miami-Dade County adopted the same policy of only allowing mask exemptions with a doctor's note.

Federal team sent to Alabama hospital

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — A federal team of health care workers has been deployed to a coastal Alabama hospital that is being 'crushed' with a surge of COVID-19 patients, the state health officer said Friday.

State Health Officer Scott Harris said the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is sending a task force team, that includes nurses, a doctor and others, to help at South Baldwin Regional Medical Center in Foley. Similar help had been sent to help in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Coastal areas have been particularly hard hit by the recent COVID-19 surge, and the team was sent to the area having the great-

est need, state health officials said.

Alabama is seeing a surge in COVID-19 cases that medical officials say is being fueled by low vaccination rates and the highly contagious delta variant.

Between July 19 and Aug. 19, Alabama went from having 500 COVID-19 patients in state hospitals to 2,764 people, including a record 50 children.

The state now has more patients receiving intensive care across than there are designated intensive care beds in the state, the Alabama Hospital Association said. While some hospitals have available ICU beds, other areas are over capacity and have converted other beds to intensive care.

NATION

Henri becomes hurricane as it moves north

Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. — The urgency of preparations for a monster storm hitting parts of the Northeast became a priority Saturday when Henri was promoted to a hurricane as the tropical system moved closer to landfall, expected to hit Long Island and Connecticut first.

Landfall is expected Sunday. Forecasters predict a dangerous storm surge could occur as early as late Saturday in portions of Long Island, Connecticut, Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. The storm surge and tide could cause high water in coastal New England as Henri moves in-

land, while heavy rain and wind may also produce flooding.

Henri was veering a bit further west than originally expected, and if that track holds, it would have eastern Long Island in its bullseye rather than New England, which hasn't taken a direct hit from a hurricane since Hurricane Bob in 1991, a Category 2 storm that killed at least 17 people.

New York hasn't had a direct hit from a major hurricane season storm since Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc in 2012. Some of the most important repairs from that storm have been completed, but many projects designed to protect against future storms re-

main unfinished.

Regardless of its exact landfall, broad impacts were expected across a large swath of the Northeast, extending inland to Hartford, Connecticut, and Albany, New York, and eastward to Cape Cod, which is teeming with tens of thousands of summer tourists. Reflecting Henri's changing track, a hurricane watch was lifted for the Cape on Saturday, though it remained under tropical storm and storm surge warnings.

The National Hurricane Center said late Saturday morning that a hurricane warning for the southern coast of New England, including Rhode Island, was being ex-

tended eastward to west of Westport, Massachusetts, encompassing Block Island. It said a tropical storm warning for the coast of Massachusetts had been extended eastward, including Nantucket.

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker urged people vacationing on the Cape to leave well before Henri hits, and those who planned to start vacations there to delay their plans.

"We don't want people to be stuck in traffic on the Cape Cod bridges when the storm is in full force on Sunday," he said.

With a top wind speed of 75 mph Saturday morning, Henri sped up slightly to move north-northeast

at 14 mph. It's still about 465 miles south of Montauk on Long Island.

Gov. Ned Lamont warned Connecticut residents they should prepare to "shelter in place" from Sunday afternoon through at least Monday morning as the state braces for the first possible direct hit from a hurricane in decades.

"This storm is extremely worrisome," said Michael Finkelstein, police chief and emergency management director in East Lyme, Connecticut. "We haven't been down this road in quite a while and there's no doubt that we and the rest of New England would have some real difficulties with a direct hit from a hurricane."

Biden picks Emanuel as Japan ambassador, Burns for China post

Associated Press

President Joe Biden is nominating former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to serve as his envoy to Japan and former senior State Department official Nicholas Burns to serve as his ambassador to China.

The White House formally announced the much-anticipated nominations Friday.

Emanuel was also a former three-term congressman who served as President Barack Obama's first White House chief of staff and was a senior adviser in President Bill Clinton's administration.

If confirmed by the Senate, Emanuel will be dispatched to Tokyo at a critical point in the U.S.-Japan relationship as Biden has made strengthening relations with partners in the Pacific a priority as he increases focus on China.

Biden with his pick of Burns turns to a seasoned career foreign service officer to serve as his envoy to arguably the most difficult diplomatic mission. The president has repeatedly called China the United States most significant economic competitor and a rising national security concern and subsequently has sought to center his foreign policy on the Pacific in the early going of his administration.

The White House also announced that Biden was tapping Michael Battle, a former diplomat, academic, and military chaplain to serve as ambassador to Tanzania. Battle was executive



Emanuel

vice president/provost at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. He also previously served as the U.S. representative to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the U.S. ambassador to the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Biden had considered naming Emanuel to serve as his transportation secretary but ultimately passed him over in the face of fierce opposition from some in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party who took issue with his record on policing and school closures in predominantly Black neighborhoods during his time as Chicago's mayor.

Emanuel served as an informal adviser to Biden's White House campaign and has been a significant force in Democratic Party politics for much of the last three decades.

He left Congress to serve as Barack Obama's first White House chief of staff, helping the president shepherd his signature health care law and push for massive stimulus in the wake of the Great Recession.

As the House Democrats' chief fundraiser in 2006, he was the architect of the wave election that delivered his party to the majority for the first time in a dozen years, and made Nancy Pelosi the first female speaker in history.

Burns previously served as undersecretary of state under President George W. Bush and as U.S. envoy to Greece and NATO. He also served as State Department spokesman and spent five years on the White House National Security Council, a tenure that overlapped the Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush administrations.



ETHAN SWOPE/AP

Central Calaveras firefighter Ryan Carpenter extinguishes flames from the Caldor Fire on Hazel Valley Road east of Riverton, Calif., on Thursday.

More winds threaten to blow California blaze into new fury

Associated Press

PLACERVILLE, Calif. — Crews were digging in and burning out fire lines amid fears that another round of high winds Saturday will bring renewed fury to a Northern California wildfire.

The Caldor Fire in the northern Sierra Nevada already destroyed dozens of homes and on Friday authorities closed down a 46-mile stretch of Interstate 50, the main route between the state capital of Sacramento and Lake Tahoe on the Nevada border.

The highway was closed after debris from the blaze fell onto the roadway and because of red flag warnings for 20- to 30 mph winds that could gust to 40 mph at times.

The road is a key checkpoint as crews struggle against the fire, which erupted earlier this week

and grew to 10 times its size in only a few days, fueled by winds.

"We're going to invest everything we can into holding the fire south" of the road, said Eric Schwab, an operations section chief with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Firefighters made progress on the fire's western side and burned vegetation to starve it of fuel and prevent the flames from heading into the evacuated community of Pollock Pines. On the northeast side, crews were protecting cabins in the dense forest area, fire officials said.

The Caldor Fire had now devoured nearly 120 square miles as fire crews battled it amid heavy timber and rugged terrain.

The blaze was one of about a dozen large California wildfires

that have scorched Northern California, incinerating at least 700 homes alone in and around the Sierra Nevada communities of Greenville and Grizzly Flats.

The fires, mainly in the northern part of the state, have burned nearly 1.5 million acres, or roughly 2,300 square miles and have sent smoke as far as the East Coast.

Ten national forests in the region have been closed because of the fire threat.

To the northwest of the Caldor Fire, the massive Dixie Fire kept expanding and new evacuations were ordered, including the tiny hamlet of Taylorsville. In five weeks, the fire about 175 miles northeast of San Francisco has become the second-largest in state history and blackened an area twice the size of Los Angeles.

NATION



A wolf from the Snake River Pack passes by a remote camera in eastern Wallowa County, Ore., in 2014.

Hunting worries grow: Biden backs end to wolf protections

Associated Press
FARIBAULT, Minn. — President Joe Biden’s administration is sticking by the decision under former President Donald Trump to lift protections for gray wolves across most of the U.S. But a top federal wildlife official on Friday told The Associated Press there is growing concern over aggressive wolf hunting seasons adopted for the predators in the western Great Lakes and northern Rocky Mountains.

Wolves under federal protection made a remarkable rebound in parts of the U.S. over the past several decades, after being driven from the landscape by excessive hunting and trapping in the early 1900s.

States took over wolf management last decade in the Northern Rockies and in January for the remainder of the Lower 48 states, including the Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest.

The removal of Endangered Species Act protections had been in the works for years and was the right thing to do when finalized in Trump’s last days, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assistant Director for Ecological Services Gary Frazer told AP.

On Friday, attorneys for the administration asked a federal judge in California to reject a lawsuit from wildlife advocates that seeks to restore protections, signaling the conclusion of Biden’s promise on his first day in office to review the Trump move.

But wolf management policies in place at the state level have shifted dramatically since protections were lifted, and Frazer suggested the federal government could take steps to restore protections if population declines put wolves back on the path to extinction.

“Certainly some of the things we’re seeing are concerning,” he

said.

Wisconsin moved quickly to reduce the state’s wolf numbers, after a pro-hunting group with close ties to conservative Republicans won a court order that allowed hunters—some using hounds—to kill 218 wolves in four days.

Meanwhile, Republican-dominated legislatures in Idaho and Montana loosened hunting rules to allow tactics shunned by many wildlife managers, including hunting wolves at night and from the air and payments for dead wolves reminiscent of bounties that drove them to near-extinction.

Frazer said the different states showed a common approach: legislatures and politically appointed wildlife commissions taking determined steps to reduce populations.

“We’re aware that circumstances have changed and we’ll be watching closely to see how the population responds,” he added.

Ex-tour manager tells of bribery in R. Kelly trial

By TOM HAYS
Associated Press
NEW YORK — A former tour manager for R. Kelly reluctantly testified Friday that he paid a \$500 bribe to a government worker to get the singer Aaliyah a fake identification card so Kelly could secretly marry her when she was 15 years old.

Demetrius Smith told a jury at Kelly’s sex-trafficking trial that after he went into a Chicago-area welfare office in 1994, he brazenly approached an employee who was taking ID photos.

“Hey, want to make some money?” he said he asked the employee before handing over the cash. He was confident the bribe would work because “everybody needs some money,” he added.

The welfare card was one of two fake IDs used to clear the way for the R&B legend to marry Aaliyah after he began a sexual relationship with her and believed she had become pregnant. A marriage license that was put into evidence falsely listed her age as 18; Kelly was 27 at the time.

Prosecutors say Kelly wanted to use the marriage, which was later annulled, to shield himself from criminal charges related to having sex with a minor and to prevent her from testifying against him.

Aaliyah, whose full name was Aaliyah Dana Haughton, worked with Kelly, who wrote and produced her 1994 debut album, “Age Ain’t Nothing But A Number.” She died in a plane crash in 2001 at age 22.

Kelly, now 54, is charged in the

bribery scheme as part of a racketeering case accusing him of sexually abusing several women, girls and boys during the course of his 30-year singing career. He’s vehemently denied the charges, claiming that the women were groupies who wanted to take advantage of his fame and fortune achieved through hits like “I Believe Can Fly.”

Forced to testify against his will after being given immunity from future charges, Smith repeatedly told the judge he was uneasy about taking the stand, though he did not give a specific reason. But with prodding from the judge, he detailed how the singer came to him while he was on a 1994 tour and told him, “Aaliyah is in trouble. We need to get home.”

They rushed back to Chicago after a concert in another city so they could arrange the marriage meant “to protect him and Aaliyah,” Smith said. He said he told Kelly, “I know how to get her an ID,” and that’s what I did.”

Earlier Friday, another former Kelly employee, Anthony Navarro, was called by the government to describe the inner workings of the Chicago-area mansion where Kelly had a recording studio and a constant stream of female visitors.

Navarro’s testimony bolstered the government’s contention that Kelly controlled everything around him and created an environment where girls and women who entered the space faced strict rules that gave them little choice but to submit to the singer’s sexual whims.

GM extends recall to cover all Chevy Bolts due to fire risk

Associated Press
GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — General Motors said Friday it is recalling all Chevrolet Bolt electric vehicles sold worldwide to fix a battery problem that could cause fires.

The recall and others raise questions about lithium ion batteries, which now are used in nearly all electric vehicles. Ford, BMW and Hyundai all have recalled batteries recently.

The GM recall announced Friday adds about 73,000 Bolts from the 2019 through 2022 model years to a previous recall of 69,000 older Bolts.

GM said that in rare cases the

batteries have two manufacturing defects that can cause fires.

The Detroit-based automaker said it will replace battery modules in all the vehicles. In older versions, all five modules will be replaced.

The latest recall will cost the company about \$1 billion, bringing the total cost of the Bolt battery recalls to \$1.8 billion.

GM said owners should limit charging to 90% of battery capacity. The Bolts, including a new SUV, also should be parked outdoors until the modules are replaced.

The original recall was blamed on a manufacturing defect at a

South Korean factory run by LG Chemical Solution, GM’s battery supplier. But the company said an investigation showed that the defects are possible in batteries made at other sites. Most newer Bolt batteries are made at an LG plant in Holland, Mich.

GM issued the first Bolt recall in November after getting reports of five of them catching fire. Two people suffered smoke inhalation and a house was set ablaze.

At first the company didn’t know what was causing the problem, but it determined that batteries that caught fire were near a full charge. It traced the fires to what it called a rare manufacturing defect in bat-

tery modules. It can cause a short in a cell, which can trigger a fire.

GM said it began investigating the newer Bolts after a 2019 model that was not included in the previous recall caught fire a few weeks ago in Chandler, Ariz.

That fire brought the total number of Bolt blazes to 10, company spokesman Dan Flores said.

GM says it is working with LG to increase battery production. The company says owners will be notified to take their cars to dealers as soon as replacement parts are ready.

Flores said he is not sure when that will be.

The company said it will not pro-

duce or sell any more Bolts until it is satisfied that problems have been worked out in LG batteries, Flores said.

“Our focus on safety and doing the right thing for our customers guides every decision we make at GM,” Doug Parks, GM product development chief, said in a statement.

Batteries with the new modules will come with an eight year, 100,000 mile warranty, the company said. GM will replace all five battery modules in 2017 to 2019 Bolts. Defective modules will be replaced in newer models.

GM said it will pursue reimbursement from the LG.

WORLD

Hundreds arrested in Australia during lockdown protests

Associated Press

SYDNEY — More than 250 people who were protesting coronavirus lockdowns in Australia were arrested Saturday and many faced fines for defying health orders, authorities said.

At least seven police officers were treated for injuries after skirmishes broke out at some of the protests, which took place in multiple cities nationwide. The largest and most violent protest was in Melbourne. Many were organized by people in encrypted online chat groups.

Sydney has been in lockdown for two months, while Melbourne and the capital, Canberra, went into lockdown earlier this month. Under the rules of the lockdown, people

are mostly confined to their homes and have limits placed on their social interactions.

Despite those measures, Sydney's New South Wales state reported a record 825 new daily community infections on Saturday. Several cities are battling outbreaks of the highly contagious delta variant.

Protesters say the lockdowns should end, but authorities say they are necessary to suppress the spread of the virus and save lives.

In Melbourne, a crowd of about 4,000 mostly unmasked protesters let off flares, yelled and blasted music in the central city. Victoria state police arrested 218 people and issued more than 200 fines, each for more than \$3,850.

Six Victoria state police officers



STEVEN SAPHORE, AAP IMAGE/AP

Police arrest a man during an anti-lockdown protest in Sydney, Australia, Saturday.

were hospitalized and three people remained in custody for allegedly assaulting police. Officers used pepper spray on several people, saying in a statement they were left with no choice.

In New South Wales state, police said they arrested 47 people and fined more than 260 in relation to protests across the state. They also issued 137 tickets after stopping

around 38,000 cars that were approaching the city.

New South Wales state police said a 32-year-old man who allegedly assaulted an officer was arrested, and they expected to file charges. The officer was taken to an area hospital for head and neck injuries, authorities said.

New South Wales Deputy Commissioner Mal Lanyon said police

expected to identify more people through closed-circuit TV and social media footage.

More than 2,000 people also gathered in Brisbane City Botanic Gardens to rally against the lockdown and vaccine measures, although Queensland state police said they didn't make any arrests.

"Wake up sheeple," read one sign at the Brisbane protest.

China to allow couples 3 children

Associated Press

BEIJING — China will now allow couples to legally have a third child as it seeks to hold off a demographic crisis that could threaten its hopes of increased prosperity and global influence.

The ceremonial legislature on Friday amended the Population and Family Planning Law as part of a decadeslong effort by the ruling Communist Party to dictate the size of families in keeping with political directives. It comes just six years after the last change.

From the 1980s, China strictly limited most couples to one child, a policy enforced with threats of fines or loss of jobs, leading to abuses including forced abortions. A preference for sons led parents to kill baby girls, leading to a massive imbalance in the sex ratio.

The rules were eased for the first time in 2015 to allow two children as officials acknowledged the looming consequences of the plummeting birthrate. The overwhelming fear is that China will grow old before it becomes wealthy.

China long touted its one-child policy as a success in preventing 400 million additional births in the world's most populous country, thus saving resources and helping drive economic growth.

However, China's birth rate, paralleling trends in South Korea, Thailand and other Asian economies, already was falling before the one-child rule. The average number of children per mother tumbled from above six in the 1960s to below three by 1980, according to the World Bank.

Meanwhile, the number of work-



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

Adults and children ride pedal cycles at a public park in Beijing, Saturday. China will now allow couples to have a third child as the country seeks to hold off a demographic crisis that threatens its hopes of increased prosperity and global influence.

ing-age people in China has fallen over the past decade and the population has barely grown, adding to strains in an aging society. A once-a-decade government census found the population rose to 1.411 billion people last year, up 72 million from 2010.

Statistics show 12 million babies were born last year, which would be down 18% from 2019's 14.6 million.

Chinese over 60, who number 264 million, accounted for 18.7% of the country's total population in 2020, 5.44 percentage points higher than in 2010. At the same time, the working-age population fell to 63.3% of the total from 70.1% a decade ago.

The shift to the two-child rule led to a temporary bump in the numbers of births but its effects soon

wore off and total births continued to fall because many women continued to decide against starting families.

At its session Friday, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress canceled the leveling of fines for breaking earlier restrictions and called for additional parental leave and childcare resources. New measures in finance, taxation, schooling, housing and employment should be introduced to "to ease the burden on families," the amendment said.

It also seeks to address longstanding discrimination against pregnant women and new mothers in the workplace that is considered one of the chief disincentives to having additional children, along with high costs and cramped housing.

Hurricane Grace crosses over Mexico's Gulf coast

Associated Press

VERACRUZ, Mexico — Hurricane Grace crossed over Mexico's Gulf shore as a major Category 3 storm early Saturday, drenching small fishing towns and beach resorts as it made its second landfall in the country in two days.

The storm had lost power while crossing over the Yucatan Peninsula on Thursday, swirling through Mexico's main tourist strip, but it rapidly drew in power from the relatively warm Gulf of Mexico as it moved toward the country's mainland.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Grace had maximum sustained winds of 125 mph early Saturday when it made landfall about 30 miles south-southeast of Tuxpan. It was heading west at 10 mph.

Forecasters said Grace would quickly lose strength as it swirled inland over a mountain range carrying its heavy rains toward the heart of the country, including the Mexico City region. Forecasters said it could drop 6 to 12 inches of rain, with more in a few isolated areas — bringing the threat of flash floods, mudslides and urban flooding.

Hours before nearing shore, Grace caused strong winds, high waves and rain in the Veracruz communities of Tuxpan, Poza Rica, Xalapa and Veracruz city as well as in coastal towns in the states of Tabasco and Tamaulipas, Mexico's meteorological agency said.

Fishermen pulled their boats

out of the water and carried them inside harbors to prevent damage as the storm's leading edge whipped at the coast. Merchants boarded up the windows of their businesses to protect them.

Authorities were expecting the central states and the Mexican capital to receive the impact as a tropical storm, with strong gusts and intermittent rains during the weekend.

Heriberto Montes Ortiz, the head of the General Technical Sub-Directorate of Mexico's National Water Commission, said Grace could cause rivers and streams to swell as well as flooding in low-lying areas, landslides and damage to roads and highways.

The agency was monitoring rivers, dams and communities expected to see heavy rain, particularly in the states of Veracruz, Puebla, Hidalgo and Tlaxcala.

The hurricane hit early Thursday near Tulum, a Yucatan resort town famed for its Mayan ruins. Some families passed harrowing hours sheltering from cracking trees and flying debris.

There were no reports of deaths, but many streets were blocked by fallen limbs and trees that pulled down power lines, leaving thousands in the dark Thursday.

Quintana Roo state Gov. Carlos Joaquín said the storm had knocked out power to some 84,000 customers in Cancun and 65,000 in Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, Puerto Aventura and Tulum.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Pharmacist reunited with class ring he lost in 1987

KS TOPEKA — A Topeka pharmacist was reunited with the class ring he lost in 1987.

The Topeka Capital-Journal reported that Jim Schwartz, owner of King Pharmacy, had his class ring custom-made in 1984.

He had attended the University of Kansas for five years while he majored in pharmacy. The \$600 ring represented that journey.

In 1987, Schwartz put his ring on a metal tray above a bathroom sink while attending a compounding conference in Minneapolis, Minn. He said it was gone when he exited the bathroom stall.

Thirty-four years later a man in Minneapolis left a message on his answering machine. He told Schwartz his ex-girlfriend of three years had purchased the ring at an estate sale before they met. The man contacted the registrar of the pharmacy school at the University of Kansas. Together, they found Schwartz.

Tagged Asian giant hornet leads state to nest

WA BLAINE — Authorities say they have found the first Asian giant hornet nest of 2021 in a rural area in Washington state, about a quarter-mile from where a resident recently reported seeing one of the hornets.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture narrowed the search area and located the nest east of Blaine, department officials said.

Crews found the nest after they followed a hornet that was equipped with a tracking device, KOMO reported. Crews were able to net and tag three hornets between Aug. 11-17.

State entomologists will now develop a plan to eradicate the nest.

Officers charged with painting swastika in car

CA LOS ANGELES — Two former Torrance police officers were charged with spray-painting a swastika inside of a resident's car, and prosecutors are now reviewing hundreds of cases involving the ex-cops, officials said.

Former officers Cody Weldin, 28, and Christopher Tomsic, 29, were each charged with conspiracy and vandalism in connection with the January 2020 incident, prosecutors announced. The two men pleaded not guilty during a brief appearance in a downtown courtroom, officials said.

According to a news release issued by the district attorney's office, Weldin and Tomsic were part of a group of officers who responded to a report of mail theft in January 2020. A car that was potentially involved in the alleged crime was towed from the scene, prose-



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

Vietnam War veterans honored

Sailors fire a canon on board the U.S.S. Constitution during a turnaround cruise in Boston. The ship sailed into Boston Harbor on Friday and fired a 21-gun salute in honor of Vietnam War veterans on board. Old Ironsides, as the warship is known, took more than 300 military veterans on a three-hour tour of the harbor to honor their service. The trip was arranged as part of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, an effort to thank Vietnam War veterans and their families

cutors said.

The two officers allegedly spray-painted a swastika on the vehicle's rear seat and a happy face on the front passenger seat, according to a criminal complaint.

Woman seriously injured in cow moose attack

CO GLENWOOD SPRINGS — An elderly woman is recovering from severe injuries after she was attacked by a cow moose outside a home in western Colorado.

The woman, whose name was not released, was taking a dog out on a leash when she was attacked outside a home south of Glenwood Springs, Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials said. She was flown by helicopter to a hospital on the Front Range due to the extent of her injuries and the care required.

The woman was dog-sitting for one of the home's residents.

Tropical stork sighting in borough rare for species

NY NEW YORK — A wood stork typically seen in tropical and subtropical regions migrated to New York City but died 10 days after it was first spotted on Staten Island, apparently after eating a large piece of hardened foam, researchers said.

THE CENSUS

3K The approximate number of fake COVID-19 vaccination cards that were recently confiscated at cargo freight facilities at the airport in Anchorage, Alaska, according to officials. U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesperson Jaime Ruiz said officers seized between 135 and 150 packages, each containing about 20 or 25 cards and all sent from the same person in China. The cards closely resembled the authentic Centers for Disease Control and Prevention certificates given out by health care workers when U.S. citizens receive their vaccinations, the agency said.

The juvenile wood stork was first seen by bird researcher Anthony Ciancimino in a saltwater marsh near Staten Island's Amazon warehouse, the Staten Island Advance reported.

Wood storks typically breed in Florida, Georgia and coastal South Carolina and are rarely seen as far north as New York. The species is the only stork breeding in the United States and was put on the federal endangered species list in 1984, but its status was changed to threatened in 2014.

Ciancimino, who maintains records of rare birds reported on Staten Island in the bird database eBird, said the last time a wood stork was spotted in the borough before this year was 1973.

Child in car stolen from gas station found safe

MO KANSAS CITY — A toddler who was in a car stolen from a Kansas City gas station was found safe, police said.

Police said the girl, 2, was found

after a woman called them to say a young child was in her backyard.

Police said the girl was unharmed, and officers in Kansas City drove the mother to her child. The stolen car was found abandoned several blocks away.

Police said they were in the midst of issuing an Amber Alert for the child when she was found.

Parents Taser student who attacked officer

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A high school student who attacked a school resource officer and tried to take her gun was taken into custody after parents used the officer's Taser on the student, police said.

The student was meeting with a counselor about returning to school when the officer was called to help deal with a "commotion," said Lt. Dan Bartlett with the Cottonwood Heights Police Department.

The student then attacked the

officer, biting and strangling her as she tried to hold the student down, KSL-TV reported.

The student expressed a desire "to get the gun and use it" at the school, police said. "He wanted to use the gun to hurt other people," Bartlett said.

Parents at the school ran to help the officer, who told them to use her stun gun. Both the officer and the student were hospitalized for evaluation.

Restaurant chain closes store, cites rising crime

GA ATLANTA — Citing rising crime rates, an Atlanta restaurant chain is closing one of its locations in Atlanta's Buckhead neighborhood.

Taco Mac announced that the restaurant has been shut down permanently after being open for 15 years, WSB-TV reported. Restaurant officials said the location is no longer safe for its employees.

The company will provide immediate placements for all managers and team members in other Taco Mac restaurants, officials said.

The chain, which has more than a dozen locations around Atlanta, plans to open five new locations in 2022.

MUSIC

Shutdown salvation



Piero F. Giunti

Los Lobos, from left: Cesar Rosas, Conrad Lozano, Steve Berlin, Louie Perez and David Hidalgo, released a Los Angeles-themed covers album, “Native Sons,” on July 30.

Los Lobos nearly called it quits last year. They made a covers album instead.

BY RANDALL ROBERTS
Los Angeles Times

Cesar Rosas had just finished strumming his guitar and singing the first lines of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” which the band would perform the next night to open a baseball game at Dodger Stadium, when he casually offered a concerning detail about the band’s status just prior to the pandemic.

“We were just about to throw in the towel and say, ‘Hey man, let’s slow down,’” said Rosas, 66, sitting at a table inside the community center at Plaza de la Raza in Los Angeles’ Lincoln Park flanked by his four Los Lobos bandmates of 40-plus years.

“We were working really hard,” added David Hidalgo, 66, who recalled being so exhausted early last year that he wondered to himself, “How much longer can we do this?” The coronavirus rendered the question moot, he said, noting after a comedic pause, “If it wasn’t for

the impending doom, the vacation would have been great.”

As he says it, laughter fills the room, and it’s hard not to hear in it some sense of relief. In addition to the grind of touring, it’s been a challenging four years for America’s most prominent Mexican American band.

Last month, the Grammy-winning Los Lobos — Rosas (guitar, bajo sexto, mandolin), Hidalgo (vocals, guitar, accordion), Louie Pérez (percussion, guitar), Conrad Lozano (bass, guitarrón) and Steve Berlin (saxophone, keyboards) — convened to talk about “Native Sons,” their new Los Angeles-themed covers album. Built in studio sessions during the 2020 shutdown, the project finds the quintet celebrating music made on its home turf.

Thee Midnitters, the Blasters, Willie Bobo, War, the Beach Boys, Lalo Guerrero, Jackson Browne, Percy Mayfield, the Jaguars, the Blasters and more: “Native Sons” serves as an argument for, and an ode to, the LA sound — as translated by one of the city’s greatest am-

bassadors. That they recorded it during their longest respite from the road in four decades might have been unplanned, but the extended break helped tether the record.

The touring halt came after an average of 100 Los Lobos shows per year since 2000, part of a commitment stretching back to the band’s formation in the mid-1970s. “The longest we had gone from the very beginning without touring was probably a month, and in that month we were probably doing something,” noted Berlin, 65, who officially joined the band in 1984 after playing with them for years.

For Perez, 68, the time off meant that he “had to get used to not having to be somewhere in 45 minutes.” His wife, for example, makes pasta on Sundays and early on he jokingly made an observation about his former life. “I sat down with a plate and she said, ‘What are you waiting for?’ I said, ‘I’m waiting for it to get cold.’” Once

SEE SALVATION ON PAGE 13

MUSIC

Salvation: Los Lobos pondered its influences

FROM PAGE 12

Perez got used to the new routine, though, “It felt like those Saturday mornings when you were a kid and you wake up and think it’s a school day but you realize it’s not. It felt like that every day.”

The all-covers project relieved them of the need to compose new originals, allowing them to ponder their influences and to do so while isolating with their families, to whom in most years they said hello and goodbye dozens of times. “The guys are all grandfathers now, so they enjoyed just being around the kids on a regular basis. I got to hang out with my family,” said Berlin, who lives in Portland, Ore.

“Native Sons” is Los Lobos’ 17th studio album since its 1978 debut, “Just Another Band From East L.A.” Back then, they were Los Lobos del Este de Los Angeles and earned a living as an all-covers wedding band. By the time they released the EP “... And a Time to Dance,” on Slash Records in 1983, they’d shortened their name as they broadened their aspirations.

Their story has been told many times, most diligently in “Los Lobos: Dream in Blue,” writer Chris Morris’ 2015 biography: how the East L.A. band expanded into Hollywood and West Hollywood as part of the city’s punk and post-punk scene; how their 1984 album for Slash, “How Will the Wolf Survive?,” earned them national and international regard alongside labelmates X and the Blasters; how their 1987 version of Ritchie Valens’ “La Bamba” hit No. 1 on the pop charts; how they expanded their approach as their artistry improved on the dynamic 1990s albums “The Neighborhood” and “Kiko”; and how, like the Grateful Dead, they’ve earned their livelihoods as a dynamic road band across their entire run.

“We don’t use a setlist most of the time. If it’s a loose setting, then we’ll just wing it,” Hidalgo told Relix magazine in 2015. “We’ll figure out maybe the first three songs and, from there, we’ll just try to read the crowd. If they shout out something, then we’ll play it.”

In operating this way, they’ve kept the wedding-band vibe while revealing the depth of their musical passions. On various nights their repertoire has included songs by Joni Mitchell, Bob Marley, Santana, Vicente Fernández, Motörhead, the Grateful Dead, Richard and Linda Thompson, Neil Young, Sir Douglas Quintet, Desmond Dekker, Led Zeppelin, Buddy Holly, Elvis Costello, Tito Puente, the Meters, Freddy Fender, Merle Haggard, Sly & the Family Stone and dozens more.

That versatility permeates “Native Sons.” The opening song, “Love Special Delivery,” is an amped-up take on an R&B song by Whittier, Calif., band Thee Midnites. Jackson Browne’s “Jamaica Say You Will,” from his 1971 solo debut, is a lovely torch song. Lalo Guerrero’s fast-paced rhumba “Los Chucos Suaves” stars Berlin’s heavy baritone sax, a mess of polyrhythms and a Hidalgo solo that glides effortlessly across the measures. “Farmer John” sees Los Lobos revisiting one of the first songs they ever released.

“Jerry Garcia said that their version of [the Grateful Dead’s] ‘Bertha’ was his favorite,” says John Allen, president of Nashville-based New West Records, which released “Native Sons.” Allen first worked with Los Lobos in the mid-1980s when he

was at indie publishing company Bug Music and helped facilitate Waylon Jennings covering Los Lobos’ “Will the Wolf Survive?”

Expecting that Los Lobos’ first record for New West would be an album of new material, Allen called their pitch for the covers album “a bit of a curveball.” After he, New West vice president of A&R Kim Buie and Los Lobos’ Berlin (who often serves as the point person on Los Lobos projects) met to discuss the LA theme, any hesitation vanished.

“If they’re inspired, you know it’s going to be good,” Allen said.

“Honestly, not having a record deal wasn’t something we thought about,” Berlin said when asked about the New West deal. “Bands like us, well into our career, that’s not the be-all-end-all.”

Also not a prerequisite is a hyperactive social media presence, although during the forced sabbatical Los Lobos recorded a number of homemade missives, including one that celebrated Cinco de Mayo. Another encouraged fans to vote for Joe Biden in the presidential election. Such

“The city of LA really did birth us. Why not try something that says thank you with an homage to the people that inspired us? What could be cooler than that?”

Steve Berlin
Los Lobos saxophonist

clips were meant to both connect with and advocate for their devoted fan base.

Lyricist and multi-instrumentalist Pérez said that such advocacy is ingrained in the band’s DNA. He cited as one example the lyrics for “A Matter of Time,” from “How Will the Wolf Survive?,” which he called “a song about an immigrant living in asylum across the border.”

“We’ve always been aware of the fact that there’s four brown faces onstage in Helsinki, Finland, or in Kyoto,” Perez stressed. “It’s our responsibility to redefine a lot of the myths that people have heard about Mexican people — and continue to.”

Their Biden support was prompted by what they’d seen while touring, both before and after the Trump administration started blanketing America with anti-immigration rhetoric.

Their first U.S. tour in 1984 was by van, Perez said, and their aim was to make an impression with audiences by celebrating the music that unified people. “We were on the road in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Richmond, Virginia, and Burlington, Vermont, and there wasn’t a Mexican person there if your life depended on it.”

He added, “They were there, but they were still in the shadows. We found them in the kitchens. They would come out during our soundcheck and say, ‘What’s

going on here? There’s a Tex-Mex song and they’re singing in Spanish.’ We’d look on the side and all of the kitchen team would be there. You can imagine how they felt.”

Perez called touring in the Trump years “us digging in and doing what we do best, which is play rock ‘n’ roll — while keeping aware that, because of a divided America, our message was more important than ever.”

That might be one reason why, instead of covering Latin-soul band War’s classic party jams “Lowrider” or “The Cisco Kid,” the band focused on the more politically charged “The World Is a Ghetto” for “Native Sons.” It also may be why they merged the long version of the bucolic Buffalo Springfield song “Bluebird” and the more protest-oriented “For What It’s Worth.” Asked if they embedded certain themes into the “Native Sons” song selection, the band didn’t have an easy answer — other than the easiest.

“Everybody picked a favorite song, or a song from a favorite band,” said bassist Conrad Lozano, 70, a Beach Boys fan who successfully lobbied for the inclusion of “Sail on, Sailor.” The striking rendition is one of the album’s highlights.

“There were certain bases we had to cover,” adds Hidalgo. “You had East LA, the soul element, the Chicano or Mexican side of things, and the hippies and Laurel Canyon.”

“The city of LA really did birth us,” Berlin says. “Why not try something that says thank you with an homage to the people that inspired us? What could be cooler than that?”

That spirit permeates “Native Sons,” notes Dave Alvin, who co-founded the Blasters with his brother Phil Alvin. Los Lobos covers the Blasters’ early rocker “Flat Top Joint” on “Native Sons.” “The great thing about the album is how eclectic the band can be. They can be Thee Midnites or they can sound like Percy Mayfield’s backup band. They can sound like a traditional cumbia group and they can sound like the Buffalo Springfield.”

Alvin witnessed Los Lobos’ versatility as the band was blossoming, when Los Lobos started gigging with the Blasters at the Whisky A Go Go in the early 1980s. “Three-fourths of the audience were just like, ‘OK, great, man, let’s have fun.’ The other quarter of the audience was like deer in the headlights, especially when they put the accordion in there to play some of the *nortenos*.” He added, “The people who loved them loved them instantly.”

Though you could be forgiven for thinking it was already a Los Angeles classic, the one original song on “Native Sons” is the band’s newly penned love letter to the city that birthed it.

Led by Hidalgo’s glorious tenor, “Native Son” illuminates a home where “there are concrete rivers flowing from the mountains to the sea” and “music playing on the radio from a house there down the street.”

Its refrain is as simple as it is true: “No matter where I lay my head / No matter how far I run / I dream about the day you’ll take me back / I’m your native son.”

Perez wrote the lyrics. “The song is a kind of tribute to LA,” he said. “We tried to create something that is us but that’s really not about us.”

REVIEWS



The Killers

Pressure Machine (Island)

Last year’s “Imploding the Mirage” saw The Killers in wide-screen, big-tent mode, with songs built for an arena tour that never happened. Faced with unexpected free time, Brandon Flowers wrote songs about his adolescent hometown in Utah and decided to make a concept album.

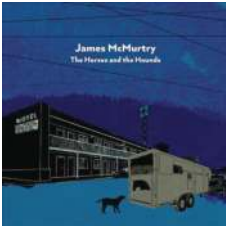
“Pressure Machine” is full of damaged people and broken dreams. Compared to “Imploding,” it’s downcast and somber, littered with opioid casualties, religious apostates, domestic abuse and youthful marriages gone sour. Flowers has said he was inspired by stories he remembers from being there in the ’90s, and snippets of interviews with current residents preface most tracks.

Bruce Springsteen’s “Nebraska” seems to be an inspiration for the exploration of small-town characters in crisis, and Flowers echoes Springsteen’s cadences in lines like “Some nights we drive up the mouth of the canyon / On hillbilly heroin pills / We get out and watch the sunset / Peaceful and still — and free” (“West Hills”).

(The admiration is mutual: Springsteen recently sang with The Killers on “Dustland.”)

Although ballads predominate — often with fiddle from Sara Watkins; one with vocals from Phoebe Bridgers — The Killers sound most at home when the tempos gallop on “Quiet Town” and “In the Car Outside.”

— Steve Klinge
The Philadelphia Inquirer



James McMurtry

The Horses and the Hounds (New West)

In recent months, James McMurtry test-drove some of this material during twice-a-week livestream performances from his home near Austin, Texas, occasionally interrupted by digital gremlins or a barking dog.

“The Horses and the Hounds” is McMurtry’s first album in six years, and the time taken to develop the new songs shows. These 10 tunes have been woodshedded until they sound both broken in and built to last, which makes it standard stuff from one of music’s best storytellers.

The set rocks, thanks partly to stellar electric guitar by David Grissom. He first worked with McMurtry more than 30 years ago, as did producer Ross Hogarth, who oversees handsome, varied arrangements that also feature cello, keyboards and accordion.

— Steven Wine
Associated Press

BOOKS

A universe much bigger than anyone believed possible

‘Secrets of the Force’ tells the definitive origin story of the ‘Star Wars’ franchise

BY JACQUELINE CUTLER
New York Daily News

The Force was not with him. The studio didn’t understand his script. The crew thought he was an idiot. Even his friends thought he was making a mistake.

But George Lucas made “Star Wars” anyway. And it made him and remade Hollywood.

“Secrets of the Force,” by Edward Gross and Mark A. Altman, tells the tale and the story of the eight movies that followed in the franchise.

Although subtitled a “Complete, Uncensored, Unauthorized Oral History,” there’s little dirt. A lot reads like old publicity interviews, promoting films. But it still emerges as the definitive origin story.

What first defined Lucas was 1973s “American Graffiti.” His debut, the dark sci-fi “THX-1138,” hadn’t drawn crowds. “Graffiti” needed to be a hit, but the studio wasn’t convinced. They considered just selling it to TV.

Then the picture opened.

“It stayed in the theaters for an entire year,” Lucas says. “For a \$700,000 investment, they made a \$100 million return. Suddenly I was very hot.”

For his follow-up, Lucas decided to return to sci-fi, but with a lighter touch. He wrote a script combining “Flash Gordon” serials, samurai movies and myths about a hero’s quest.

Studios passed. Finally, Lucas went to Alan Ladd Jr., an executive at 20th Century Fox.

“He said, ‘I don’t understand this,’” Lucas recalls. “‘Dogs flying spaceships? This is ridiculous and I don’t understand what you’re talking about, but I think you’re talented.’”

Lucas secured a small budget and a modest fee. He also asked for and received merchandising and sequel rights. He had faith in the film’s future, even if the studio didn’t.

William Katt, Christopher Walken, and Cindy Williams were among the early possibilities for Luke, Han and Leia. Lucas settled on Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher. They weren’t particularly impressed with the project.

“When I was auditioning,”

Hamill says, “I thought, ‘Are we doing a Mel Brooks-ian send-up?’”

They were no more confident on the set. Ford openly ridiculed the dialogue. Fisher complained Lucas’ only acting tip was “faster and more intense.” And the crew, Hamill says, “all thought it was, to put it kindly, rubbish.”

It was during post-production that the picture started to come together. Lucas’ then-wife, Marcia, a skilled editor, cut together amazing battle sequences. John Dykstra’s dazzling special effects were inserted. John Williams’ score added swashbuckling drama.

The movie opened May 25, 1977. The lines at theaters were instantaneous.

“The immediate public reaction took us aback,” said producer Gary Kurtz. “What happened was phenomenal.”

Studios took it as a lesson on how to make a blockbuster. Critics saw it as a betrayal of the smaller, serious movies the decade had been famous for. Some even blamed Lucas’ “Star Wars” and Steven Spielberg’s “Jaws,” for ruining cinema.

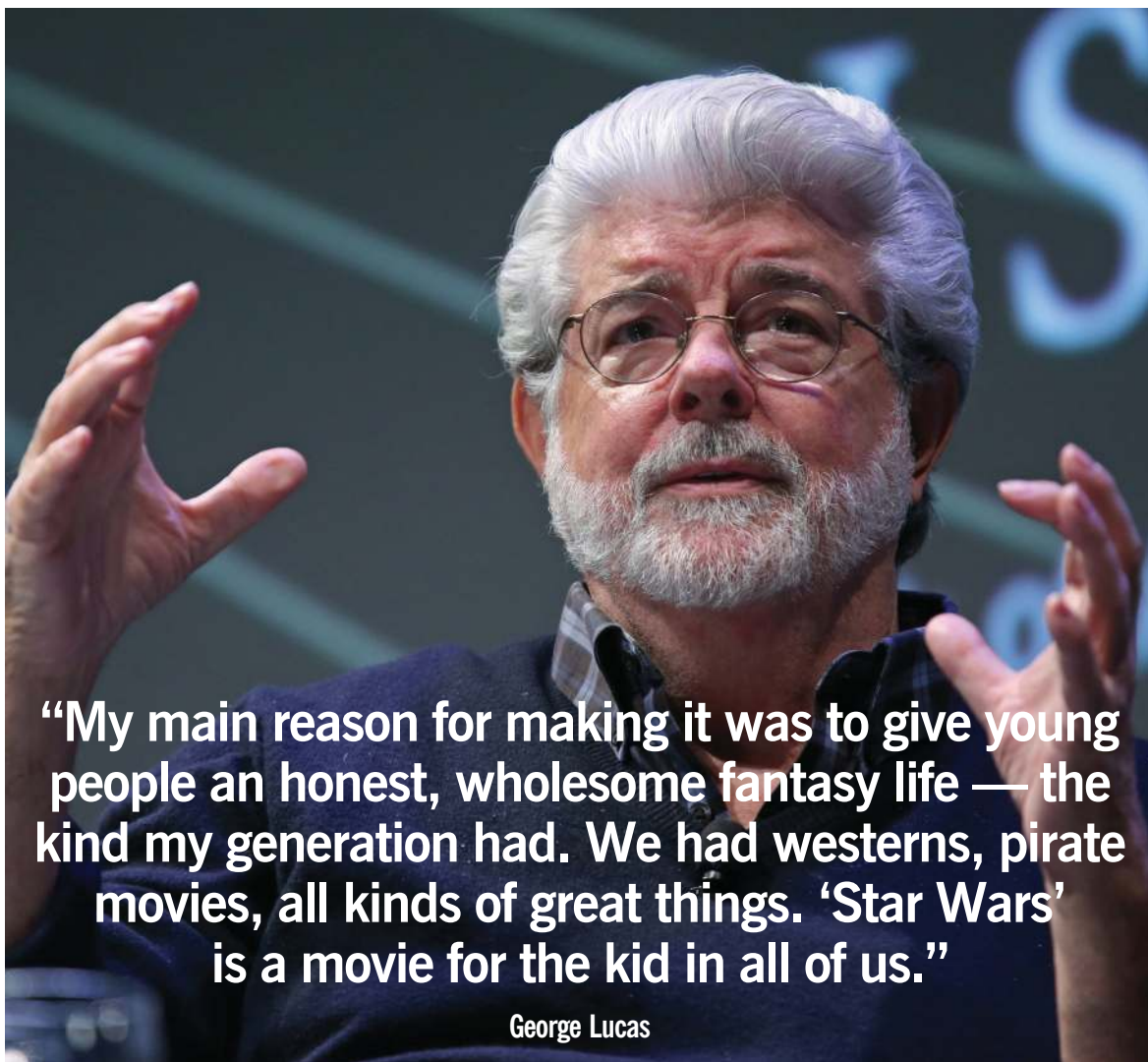
“We have ruined nothing,” Lucas protested. “And another thing: The films of the ’70s weren’t that great.”

Lucas was proud of what he had created. Adding to it would consume most of his life.

Not everything worked. “The Star Wars Holiday Special,” a 1978 variety show with the original cast cutting up with Harvey Korman, looked like a shameless cash grab. Only Fisher seemed to be having any fun, and that was because, show writer Bruce Vilanch joked, she was “snorting the Sweet & Low.”

The first film sequels went better, though, with Lucas handing off directing chores. The second episode, “The Empire Strikes Back,” had to overcome some real-life problems: Ford wasn’t eager to return, and Hamill was badly scarred in a car crash. But that gave the film, directed by Irvin Kershner, a darker edge, making it a fan favorite.

The third film, “Return of the Jedi,” directed by Richard Marquand, was more problematic. “It didn’t hold together,” Kershner

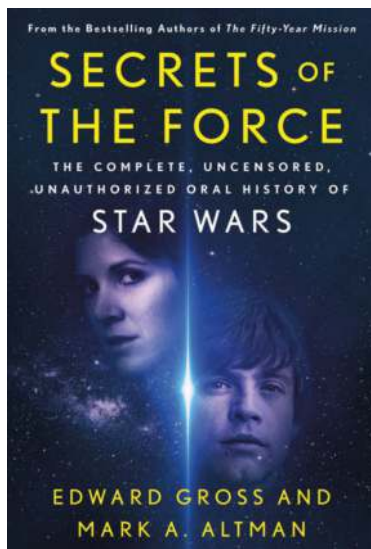


“My main reason for making it was to give young people an honest, wholesome fantasy life — the kind my generation had. We had westerns, pirate movies, all kinds of great things. ‘Star Wars’ is a movie for the kid in all of us.”

George Lucas

CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

George Lucas, pictured in 2014, found little support when he set out to make “Star Wars,” a film that made him and remade Hollywood.



tested Ahmed Best, the Black actor who played him. “Adults want to pick it apart, but if they’re doing that, they’re missing the point.”

“Jar Jar wasn’t racist,” co-star Samuel L. Jackson insisted. “That was Ahmed’s interpretation of who he was.”

The movie spawned two more films. More criticism, too, as people carped about slow-moving plots and awkward performances. Some fans wondered if it was because Lucas had gotten divorced from his wife, Marcia, who had been in the editing room for the original films.

But it didn’t matter. Most of the franchise’s original fans still turned out, while the latest films attracted new ones — and new merchandising opportunities. Soon it was time to start work on another, final trilogy.

Once again, Lucas brought in other directors to help. J.J. Abrams helmed the faithful first installment, “The Force Awakens.”

A franchise fan, he honored the original stars while expanding the cast, bringing on Oscar Isaac, Daisy Ridley, Adam Driver and John Boyega.

The next film, “The Last Jedi,” was more of a break from tradition. Director Rian Johnson changed the pace, took the story in unexpected directions, and introduced a new character played by Kelly Marie Tran. Some fans praised the approach. Others attacked it, cruelly trolling Tran on the internet.

Abrams was brought back for the ninth and final episode. His film undid some of Johnson’s changes but faced its own problem: What to do about Carrie Fisher? The actress died unexpectedly. Should Leia be written out?

Apparently, that was the plan until the late star’s brother, Todd Fisher, became involved.

“I knew there was unused footage of her,” he said. “J.J. told me there was footage.” He demanded, publicly, that the series find a way to bring her back. Disney, which had bought Lucas’ film in 2015 for \$4 billion, sent him a cease-and-desist letter.

Eventually, Disney gave in, repurposing some unused footage from “The Force Awakens.”

Once again, the film divided old and new fans. Once again, the film made hundreds of millions of dollars. But now, finally, Lucas’ epic saga had drawn to a close.

Except — not quite. The “Star Wars” universe continues to add new worlds — video games, cartoons, movie spinoffs, TV series. Forty-five years after Lucas began his story about something that happened, “A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away,” the adventure continues.

“My main reason for making it was to give young people an honest, wholesome fantasy life — the kind my generation had,” Lucas once explained. “We had westerns, pirate movies, all kinds of great things. ‘Star Wars’ is a movie for the kid in all of us.”

CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

JIGSAW PUZZLE

BY CHRISTINA IVERSON AND JEFF CHEN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Christina Iverson, of Ames, Iowa, is a stay-at-home mom with two young kids. Jeff Chen is a writer and professional crossword constructor in Seattle. This puzzle’s theme started with the vague concept of moving pieces and morphed from dominoes to magnets and finally to jigsaws (“all interests of my son,” Christina says). This is the pair’s second Sunday collaboration. — W.S.

Note: When this puzzle is done, insert the five shaded jigsaw pieces into the box at the bottom to get a three-word phrase, reading across, for what jigsaw puzzles provide.

ACROSS

1 Part of a pie or the earth

6 Style that makes waves

10 Doe in a court case

14 Flubs

19 Keister

20 China holder?

21 Axe target

22 Some Madison Avenue workers

23 End of many a sports broadcast

24 Freestyles, perhaps

25 Barflies

26 Botch

27 “First, you’re going to want to dump out the box and ____”

31 Francis of old game shows

34 Bounded

35 Capital on a 126-mile-long canal that’s used as a skating rink in the winter

39 English breakfast, e.g.

40 “What’s most useful next is to ____”

45 College-app component

46 Role for “Ronny” Howard

48 Joshes

49 State flower of Utah

50 One of the B’s in BB&B

51 Field work of note in 1979

54 Rifle, in frontier lingo

57 “To connect things up you’ll have to ____”

63 Ones getting the crumbs?

66 Bonnie with five Top 40 hits in the 1990s

67 Euphoric feeling

71 Love to bits

72 More like a dive bar or certain bread

74 Beehives, but not hornets’ nests

75 Daredevil’s hashtag

76 Very in

78 One of the B’s in BB&B

79 Good name for an investor?

82 High-end Italian auto, informally

83 “As you go, make sure you exercise your ____”

88 At peace

89 Little bouquets

90 “ka-POW!”

93 “With patience and perseverance you’re sure to ____”

97 Course goal

100 Songs that can be trilling?

102 Castigates

103 Fairy-tale figure

105 Confer, as credibility

106 Gets wild and crazy

108 Legendary

109 Leave skid marks, maybe

111 N.F.L. standout

113 Homes for high fliers

114 Instruction to drivers leaving cars at a garage

115 “C’mon, slowpoke!”

116 Ends, as a mission

117 Mary Poppins, for one

118 Pick up on

15 Keats, for one

16 Sounds in a yoga studio

17 Government economic org., at any rate?

18 ____-Cat

28 Big suit

29 Derby, e.g.

30 Menial laborer, metaphorically

31 Loads

32 Take back, for short

33 Retreat

36 “Was it ____ I saw?” (classic palindrome)

37 Mists, e.g.

38 Feeling it after a marathon, say

41 Approves

42 Perspective

43 Achievement for Whoopi Goldberg, in brief

44 Like cioccolato or torta

47 Titus and Tiberius

50 Bosom buddies

52 Staple of skin care

53 Sought office

55 U.P.S. competitor

56 Steady, maybe

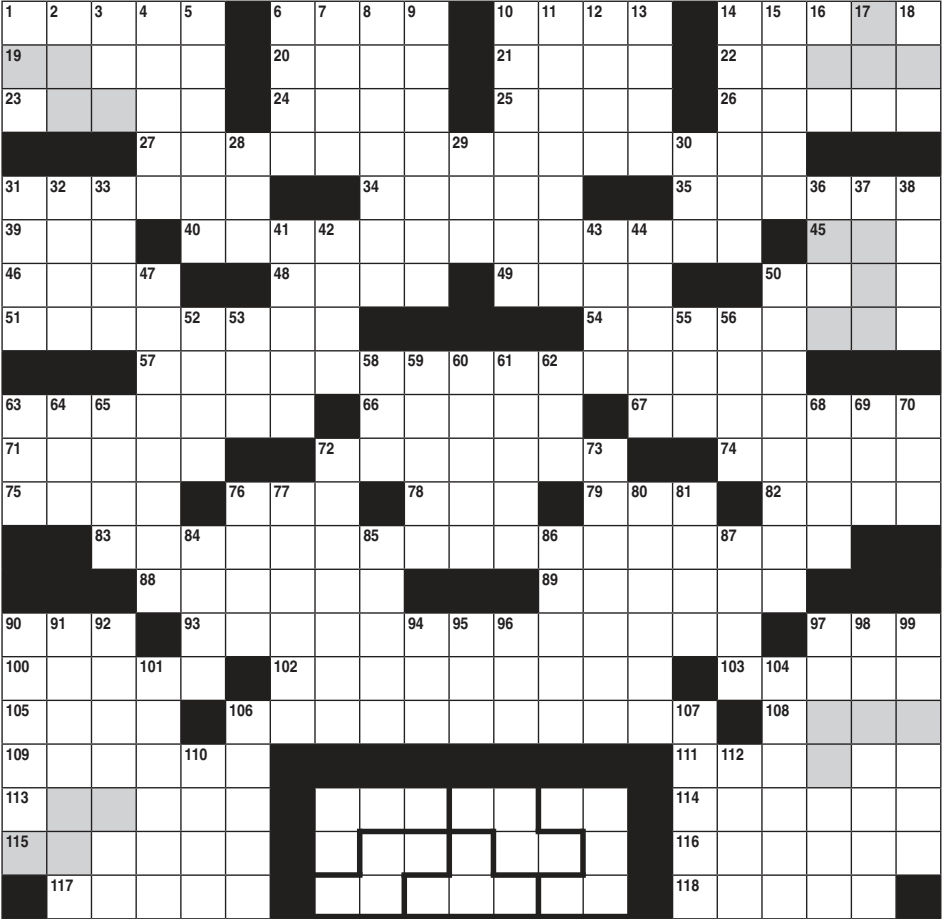
58 Wrath

59 Exercise program since the 1990s

60 Sharp, on a TV, informally

61 Peak sacred to the goddess Rhea

62 Noshed on



63 “You’ll ____ for this!”

64 Words with a ring to them?

65 Letter between foxtrot and hotel in the NATO alphabet

68 How people often scroll through social media

69 “That’s gotta hurt!”

70 “The Puzzle Palace” org.

72 More straight-faced

73 Creamy Italian dish

76 Word that becomes its own opposite by putting a “T” at the front

77 Singer whom M.L.K. Jr. called the “queen of American folk music”

80 Play again, as a TV special

81 Companion in Brittany

84 Brain diagnostics, for short

85 Used as a rendezvous point

86 Devote

87 Name suffix meaning “mountain”

90 Fir tree

91 “Is it still a date?”

92 Roman goddess of wisdom

94 Prefix with color or state

95 Sugar ending

96 W.W.II fighters

97 Apps made with jalapeños and cheese

98 “You agree?” (*nudge, nudge*)

99 Gathers some intel

101 Actor Brody

104 Singer Willie

106 Annoying

107 Grannies

110 Blood line

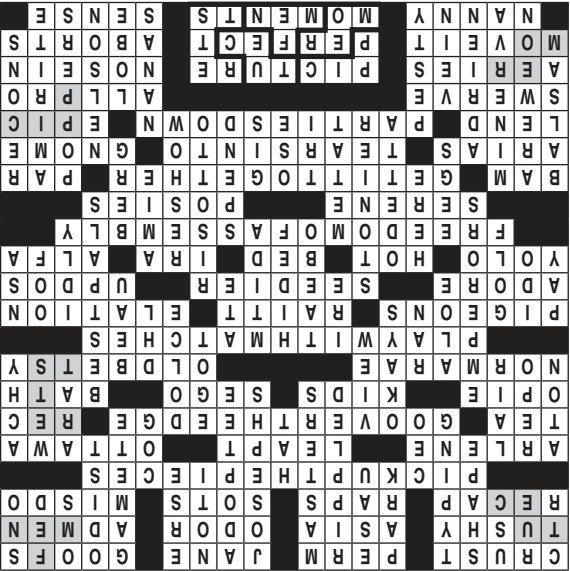
112 Temporal ____

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



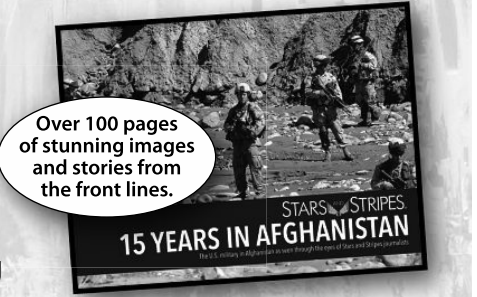
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GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/TNS

Seth Pae orders a sandwich at Paulette’s Public Market on Aug. 3 in Chicago. The sandwich and salad shop partners with the app Too Good to Go, which connects customers to businesses with food nearing its expiration date and sells it at a reduced price, with the goal of reducing food waste.

Fighting waste

Too Good to Go app keeps leftover food out of landfills by connecting consumers to surplus food at bargain prices

By Maya Mokh
Chicago Tribune

At the end of a given day, restaurants, markets and other food stores often have leftover food that is still perfectly good, but can no longer be sold the next day. That food often gets thrown away, contributing to increasing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. And nearly 700 million people around the world still go to bed hungry every night.

Too Good to Go, a tech-for-good app that launched in 2016 and has recently expanded to Chicago, is fighting food waste by connecting users to surplus food from local businesses. Users pay a fee of \$4-\$6 and receive a “Surprise Bag,” filled with food worth three times more than they paid.

“It’s really about getting that win-win-win concept, where stores don’t throw away food anymore, where consumers like you and me can contribute to fighting against food waste, while getting great food for a third of the price, and where together we really help the planet, because today food waste is responsible for 8% of greenhouse gas emissions,” said co-founder Lucie Basch.

Launched in the U.S. only 10 months ago, the app is already running in more than 10 cities and launched in Chicago a couple of weeks ago.

“We’ve already saved 5,000 meals from the trash and we have more than 100 local partners,” Basch said. “So it actually went really, really fast in Chicago.”

Deep Purpl, a local açai bowl company, is one of those partners, and its founder, Gabriel Fleury, says they receive about two to five Too Good to Go orders per day, on average. He found out about the app when one of its co-founders knocked on his door, and he immediately loved the idea.

“I wanted to do it right away,” Fleury said.

He said the app helps save food that would have otherwise gone to waste due to customers not picking up their orders, or employees making mistakes.

According to him, the implementation was very simple and the app is “super easy” to use and has been well-liked by customers.

“I’ve worked in the restaurant industry, and there’s so much (waste),” said Paul Ramsy, 32, of Wicker Park, a Too Good To Go user. “Just knowing that what I’m picking up at the end of the day is not getting tossed, that makes me feel great.”

He said his experience has been seamless so far and plans to use the app at least once a week.

In just a few months in the U.S., there are already close to 1.5 million registered Too Good To Go users.

“The fact that it’s so simple, and it really fits in the operation of stores makes it really successful and makes everyone willing to join,” Basch said.

In addition to reducing their food waste and receiving a profit from the fee minus the TGTG commission, Basch said businesses also benefit from the app because it brings in new consumers that discover their food through the app.

Paulette’s Public Market, another Chicago partner, has enjoyed success with TGTG.

While the number of bags sold really varies day to day, “as many bags as we put up, they sell,” owner Philip Baber said. Examples of what customers can expect to get in their bags include a loaf of West Town multigrain bread, along with housemade chorizo and queso dip, trout dip, a quart of macaroni deli salad and more.

The market, which sells fresh deli items that usually don’t have a very long shelf life, is very conscious of food waste and sustainability.

“It was really a good opportunity for us to cut down dramatically on the waste that we had,” he said.

“The beauty of Too Good to Go is that, literally as a store owner, if you are about to throw food away tonight, then just give us a call because on the same day you can have people that come to your places and save the food.”

GADGETS

Tiny dashcam that can hide behind your rearview mirror

By Gregg ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Garmin has always been a technology leader with almost any product they have introduced, so the great performance of the all new **Garmin Dash Cam Mini 2** is no surprise. It’s part of the 2021 voice-controlled dashcam series, with automatic video storage and Live View monitoring options.

The first thing you notice about the \$129.99 Dash Cam Mini 2 is the size. Garmin refers to it as tiny right on the box. At just 1.23-by-2.09-by-1.14-inches, it’s amazing what Garmin has packed inside, including a 140-degree field of view. The small size allows it to be almost entirely hidden behind my rearview mirror.

An automatic continual recording is done with clarity during the day and at night with a 1080p resolution of up to 30 FPS. An adhesive mount, power cables, and a dual USB power adapter are included. On-board automatic video storage goes into a micro SD memory card (not included).

There’s no on-board display on the Dash Cam Mini 2. Instead, live view monitoring is done with the free Garmin Drive app (iOS and Android), which pairs with the Dash Cam Mini 2 via Bluetooth. The app has loads of other features including live traffic, weather, video sharing and live parking availability as you near your destination.

On-camera controls are easy to use for formatting memory cards, pairing to a smartphone, and taking video snapshots. Voice control capabilities keep the driver hands-free. With the Garmin incident detection (fortunately, I didn’t test this feature), once an incident is detected, the video from before, during and after the incident is captured and saved.

Garmin’s vault storage basic plan for 24-hour video storage is included. Options for upgraded plans include the standard plan, \$4.99 monthly, which gives you seven days of storage. The advanced plan is \$9.99 a month and will store videos for 30 days.

While all that is great, what got my attention is how fast and easy it was to get the dashcam run-

ning, just minutes from the unpacking to mounted and running on my dashboard.

Other Garmin dash cams in the new voice-controlled dashcam series include the Dash Cam 47 (\$169.99) with HD 1080p recording and GPS. The Dash Cam 57 (\$229.99) has HD 1440p and GPS, while the Dash Cam 67W (\$259.99) has HD 1440p, GPS and extra-wide 180-degree lens captures cross-traffic details.

Online: buy.garmin.com

Monoprice BT-600ANC over-the-ear wireless headphones are budget-friendly headphones (\$79.99) packed with every feature you’ll need.

I’m a fan of Active Noise Cancelling, and these lightweight headphones do a good job with that. It’s controlled within the modes of the headphones and work with the built-in microphones to cancel out unwanted background sounds.

With Bluetooth 5.0 for pairing to multiple devices, the Monoprice BT-600ANC headphones feature a 40-hour playtime with full USB-C charge. They aren’t waterproof but have Qualcomm aptX HD Audio, AAC, and touch controls. With the ambient sound mode to mute the volume, all you do is place your hand over the right ear cup’s multifunctional touchpad.

Cosmetically, they have a durable construction with an adjustable headband, which folds up to store in the included carrying case. Inside the padded ear cups are 40mm drivers, which deliver the extended frequency range sound. Touch controls are responsible for controlling music selections, hands-free calls and volume.

The sound produced is good. It’s not fair to say these are the best headphones you can buy, but for what they are meant to do and sound like, they do a great job, especially for the cost. The sound is clear, with a decent amount of bass, and certainly fits the need for portable headphones for students or anyone who needs them on the go.

If you’re looking for solid headphones, with good sound, a friendly price, and endless features, the Monoprice BT-600ANC is a great choice.

Online: monoprice.com



GARMIN/TNS

Garmin Dash Cam Mini 2 has a 140-degree field of view.



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OPINION

Proposed VA reforms could hamper access to benefits

By ROB MANESS

Special to Stars and Stripes

Taking care of the men and women that have bravely served in our military to protect our nation and fight for freedom around the globe has unfortunately become a generational challenge.

Right now, we offer a flawed system to our veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs has been underfunded for years as it continues to suffer from insufficient hospitals and a broken, backlogged benefits system. There are solutions out there, but Congress must ensure that any reforms they pass ultimately help serve the best interests of our veterans.

The disability claims backlog has ballooned during the coronavirus pandemic and of the roughly 520,000 pending VA claims for disability compensation and benefits, 191,000 are backlogged, or older than 125 days. With that number only expected to grow in the out years as claims associated with Agent Orange and toxic burn pit exposure start working their way through the system, the need for outside assistance to help veterans navigate the disability claims process is as great as it has even been.

Concerned about the current backlog, both Congress and the Biden administration have requested significant boosts to the VA budget for fiscal year 2022 in an attempt to right some of these past wrongs. But while this increase in funding could not come at a more critical time, the Biden administration's latest VA budget request also contains concerning proposed changes to the existing network of outside benefits support entities.

The current network of outside support consists of three main actors: all-volunteer Veterans Service Organizations, VA-hired accredited actors (namely lawyers) and private consulting agents. Each of these organizations serves a distinct role in helping veterans navigate the process and will be important in helping to process the wave of future disability applications.

As part of their budget request, the Biden administration has proposed the creation of "a single, national standard to serve as a general deterrent against bad actors" that "would allow for more meaningful enforcement against unaccredited individuals." Within that same budget request, the administration also asks for an amendment to title 38 of the U.S. Code so that "individuals could no longer become accredited as claims agents for purposes of preparing, presenting, or prosecuting claims for VA benefits." This language is similar to a bill that Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., tried to advance through the previous Congress unsuccessfully. While it may all sound well-intentioned, making these changes would have significant unintended consequences for our veterans.

Relying solely on accredited actors will eliminate private consulting agents — leaving the initiation phase for claims solely on the backs of VSOs, as accredited actors currently can only step in when a claim has been denied or an appeal is necessary. While well-intentioned, these volunteer organizations simply do not have the manpower or expertise that private consulting agents can bring to bear to handle the massive inflow of benefits claims expected over the next few years, likely making the backlog worse.

Furthermore, by creating what would essentially be a monopoly for the accredited agents and lawyers, this proposal would significantly limit veteran choice. Accredited agents are paid by the VA regardless of whether they win or lose an appeal. This can often result in a dragged-out appeal instead of a quick resolution.

Any reforms to the VA should support an increase in a veteran's choice in the area of filing initial claims and appeals. One easy solution is to reform the accreditation system to expand access and choice. This will also help root out any bad external actors that may exist in the disability benefits claims system in the process. The creation of a privatized option in a public system, and the introduction of more choice, has created great outcomes in the past. For example, private tax preparation and private ambulance services are very effective and popular choices citizens use every day.

The current system by which veterans receive much-needed and hard-earned benefits and care has its flaws. But with a current backlog that is only likely to grow over the next decade, we should take a hard look at any reforms coming out of Congress or the current presidential administration. Our veterans deserve a system that is accessible, easy to navigate and provides options that allow them to achieve the best possible outcome. This is the least we can do to provide a small thank you for their service to achieve the disability rating they are medically, legally and ethically eligible for.

Rob Maness, a retired U.S. Air Force colonel, serves on the board of Military Veterans Advocacy Inc.

As Biden's poll numbers slip, Dems should be nervous

By HENRY OLSEN

Special to The Washington Post

The media is hammering President Joe Biden over the chaotic fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban. That can only amplify what was already a slow but steady decline in his job approval numbers.

Biden started his presidency in good standing with a healthy 55.5% approval rating in the RealClearPolitics polling average. His net favorability began to decline in the late spring as previously undecided respondents said they disapproved of his performance, but his favorability ratings remained stable and high. His job approval rating was 54.9% on May 25, a statistically insignificant drop from his early standing. That standing has been in steady decline ever since. His job approval dropped to 53% by June 25 and 52.2% by July 25. As of Wednesday, it stands at 49.6%. Disapprovals are also at a record high of 47.2%. That 2.4 percentage point net favorability is the lowest of his presidency.

This should be especially troubling to Democrats because the polling average includes only two polls taken as Kabul was falling to the Taliban. Those polls — the GOP-leaning Rasmussen Report and the Economist/YouGov weekly survey — show Biden's net favorability at negative eight and even, respectively. The Reuters-Ipsos poll from earlier in the month that is included in the average gave him a 51% favorable, 43% unfavorable rating. But a one-day poll taken by the company on Monday found his favorability had dropped to 46%, the lowest mark in that poll of his tenure.

None of this should come as a surprise to the

administration or to Democrats. Presidential ratings tend to fall over time from a post-inauguration high. Analysts from both parties have long argued that the odds were against Democrats holding their congressional majorities in the midterm elections given their slim margins and historical trends.

Biden's fall from grace, however, is eerily similar to Barack Obama's decline in a similar period. Obama started his presidency in stronger shape, with a 65.5% job approval rating and net 40 rating on Feb. 15, 2009. Like Biden, Obama's approval ratings stayed relatively high through the spring even as his disapprovals slowly rose. On June 23, 2009, Obama's approval rating was at 60%, and his net approval was a healthy 27 points. The decline started to happen as the summer recess kicked in and Americans started to focus on his "Obamacare" proposal. His job approval dropped to 51.4% on Aug. 19, and his net approval dropped to 10 points. The writing was on the wall: Democrats were pushing Obamacare too much and too fast for centrists and independents.

Something similar is probably what was behind Biden's pre-Afghanistan decline. As the pandemic faded into the background with the rise in vaccinations, many American voters started to think about other things. They saw high inflation and an administration focused more on pushing an unprecedented expansion of federal government power than on economic recovery. The incompetence on display now will only add to the sense that the administration is out of touch and out of control.

Biden's weakness is most apparent among independent voters. More of this crucial bloc disapproved of Biden's performance than ap-

proved of it in the most recent Economist/YouGov and Politico-Morning Consult polls, and he had only a 44% approval rating with independents in the pre-Monday Reuters-Ipsos poll. While Democrats remain staunchly in support, that simply isn't enough to preserve the party's congressional majority given that the Democratic base support is concentrated in a small number of urban areas. It simply doesn't matter how many votes the party gets in New York or Silicon Valley; if it loses among independents, it will lose seats in more marginal suburban and rural seats nationwide.

Republicans are surely salivating over what might happen next. If Biden placates his party's vocal progressive base, he will double down on pushing as much of his liberal agenda through as possible. The more he gives them, the likelier a 2010-style GOP tsunami reappears. If he plays for the general election, however, he angers that base. That will increase intraparty strife, which will become a major issue in 2022 as progressives challenge less-leftist incumbents and push for more left-wing policies to motivate the party's base to vote. There's no sign that progressives will sit quietly if Biden chooses the latter approach, and there's no evidence that independent voters will sit quietly in the Democratic column if Biden pushes leftward.

Biden's coalition was always more anti-Donald Trump than pro-Democratic. His declining job approval ratings are a sign of that. The Democratic dilemma won't go away soon no matter what happens in Afghanistan.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

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PRO SOCCER

MLS							
EASTERN CONFERENCE							
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
New England	14	3	4	46	40	25	
Nashville	7	2	11	32	32	20	
NYCFC	9	6	4	31	34	19	
Philadelphia	8	5	7	31	26	19	
Orlando City	8	4	7	31	29	24	
D.C. United	8	9	3	27	31	29	
CF Montréal	7	7	6	27	26	25	
Columbus	6	8	6	24	21	25	
Atlanta	5	6	9	24	23	25	
New York	6	9	4	22	23	24	
Chicago	5	10	5	20	23	32	
Inter Miami CF	5	9	4	19	18	30	
Cincinnati	3	7	8	17	18	30	
Toronto FC	3	11	6	15	24	41	
WESTERN CONFERENCE							
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
Seattle	11	3	6	39	33	16	
Sporting KC	11	4	5	38	36	21	
LA Galaxy	11	8	2	35	32	32	
Colorado	10	4	4	34	27	18	
Real Salt Lake	7	6	6	27	29	21	
Minnesota	7	6	6	27	22	23	
San Jose	6	7	8	26	24	29	
Portland	7	9	3	24	26	36	
LAFC	6	8	5	23	24	26	
FC Dallas	5	9	6	21	23	28	
Vancouver	4	7	8	20	21	29	
Houston	3	8	9	18	21	30	
Austin FC	4	11	4	16	14	23	

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

Friday's game	
San Jose 2, LA Galaxy 1	
Saturday's games	
Sporting Kansas City at Minnesota Seattle at Columbus Chicago at Orlando City CF Montréal at Philadelphia Atlanta at D.C. United Cincinnati at New England New York City FC at New York Toronto FC at Miami FC Dallas at Houston Portland at Austin FC Real Salt Lake at Colorado Los Angeles FC at Vancouver	
Friday, Aug. 27	
Cincinnati at Columbus Toronto FC at CF Montréal Miami at Orlando City	
Saturday, Aug. 28	
Nashville at Atlanta Chicago at New York LA Galaxy at Los Angeles FC New England at New York City FC Philadelphia at D.C. United Colorado at Sporting Kansas City Minnesota at Houston	

NWSL							
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
Portland	9	3	2	29	21	8	
North Carolina	7	4	3	24	18	9	
Gotham FC	5	2	6	21	14	9	
Orlando	5	4	6	21	18	17	
Chicago	6	7	3	21	16	22	
Washington	5	5	4	19	17	17	
Reign FC	6	7	1	19	17	15	
Houston	5	6	3	18	17	20	
Louisville	4	6	4	16	12	20	
Kansas City	1	9	4	7	7	20	

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

Saturday's games	
Kansas City at North Carolina Gotham FC at Reign FC	
Sunday's game	
Orlando at Washington	
Wednesday, Aug. 25	
Louisville at Kansas City Gotham FC at Portland	
Saturday, Aug. 28	
Kansas City at Chicago	

TENNIS

Chicago 125	
Friday At XS Tennis Village Chicago	
Purse: \$115,000 Surface: Hardcourt outdoor	
Women's Singles Quarterfinals	
Ann Li (3), United States, def. Zarina Diyas, Kazakhstan, 6-4, 2-6, 6-3. Clara Tauson, Denmark, def. Storm Sanders, Australia, 7-5, 6-3. Claire Liu, United States, def. Vitalia Diatchenko, Russia, 6-2, 6-3.	
Women's Doubles Semifinals	
Mona Barthel, Germany, and Yu-Chieh Hsieh, Taiwan, def. Kristina Mladenovic and Clara Burel, France, 6-4, 6-7 (4), 12-10. Peangtarn Plipuech, Thailand, and Eri Hozumi, Japan, def. Alison van Uytvanck and Greet Minnen, Belgium, 5-7, 6-3, 10-4.	

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Connecticut	17	6	.739	—
Chicago	11	11	.500	5½
New York	11	13	.458	6½
Washington	8	13	.381	8
Atlanta	6	16	.273	10½
Indiana	5	18	.217	12
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Las Vegas	17	6	.739	—
Seattle	17	7	.708	½
Minnesota	13	9	.591	3½
Phoenix	12	10	.545	4½
Dallas	10	14	.417	7½
Los Angeles	9	13	.409	7½
Thursday's games				
Connecticut 82, Minnesota 71 Phoenix 77, Washington 64 Los Angeles 66, Atlanta 64				
Friday's games				
Seattle 99, New York 83 Indiana 83, Dallas 81				
Saturday's games				
Phoenix at Atlanta Minnesota at Chicago				
Sunday's games				
Los Angeles at New York Seattle at Washington				
Monday's games				
No games scheduled				

DEALS

Friday's transactions	
BASEBALL	
Major League Baseball American League	
BALTIMORE ORIOLAS — Claimed RHP Chris Ellis off waivers from the Tampa Bay Rays. Designated RHP César Valdez for assignment. Announced LHP Ryan Hartman has cleared outright waivers and been assigned to Norfolk (Triple-A East).	
DETROIT TIGERS — Transferred OF Akil Baddoo to the 10-day IL.	
LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Selected the contract of RHP Jose Marte from Salt Lake (Triple-A West) and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Optioned RHP Aaron Slegers to Salt Lake. Released RF Adam Eaton.	
MINNESOTA TWINS — Placed INF Miguel Sano on the paternity list. Recalled RHP Edgar García from St. Paul (Triple-A East). Announced RHP Nick Vincent has cleared waivers and will be assigned to St. Paul.	
NEW YORK YANKEES — Optioned RHP Brody Koerner to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (Triple-A East).	
OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Reinstated INF/OF Chad Pinder from the 10-day IL. Optioned OF Seth Brown to Las Vegas (Triple-A West).	
SEATTLE MARINERS — Recalled RHP Yohan Ramirez from Tacoma (Triple-A West). Placed RHP Casey Sadler on the paternity list.	
TAMPA BAY RAYS — Optioned LHP Dietrich Enns to Durham (Triple-A East). Recalled RHP Chris Mazza from Durham. Agreed to terms with RHP David Hess on a minor league contract.	
TEXAS RANGERS — Recalled INF Nick Solak from Round Rock (Triple-A West). Selected the contract of RHP Nick Snyder from Round Rock and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Placed RHP Joe Barlow on the 10-day Injured List. Placed INF Charlie Culberson on the COVID-19 IL. Transferred LHP John King from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.	
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Sent RHP Rafael Dolis outright to Buffalo (Triple-A East).	
National League	
ATLANTA BRAVES — Signed C Travis d'Arnaud to a two-year contract with a club option for 2024.	
CHICAGO CUBS — Sent RHP Jonathan Holder to ACL Cubs (Arizona Complex League) on a rehab assignment. Released RHP Dan Winkler. Sent CF Johneshwy Fargas outright to Iowa (Triple-A East).	
COLORADO ROCKIES — Reinstated LHP Austin Gombor from the paternity list. Optioned RHP Ashton Goudeau to Albuquerque (Triple-A West), effective August 19.	
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Shane Greene on a major league contract. Placed RHP Evan Phillips on the 10-day IL. Designated RHP Conner Greene for assignment. Sent RHP Joe Kelly to Rancho Cucamonga (Low-A West) on a rehab assignment.	
MIAMI MARLINS — Optioned RHP Nick Neidert to Jacksonville (Triple-A East). Transferred RHP Cody Poteet to the 60-day IL. Selected the contract of RHP Austin Pruitt from Jacksonville and agreed to terms on a major league contract.	
NEW YORK METS — Sent RHP Jordan Yamamoto to the Florida Complex League Mets (FCL) on a rehab assignment. Claimed RHP Heath Hembree off waivers from Cincinnati. Transferred RHP Jacob deGrom has been from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL. Placed RHP Jake Reed on the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Yennys Diaz from Syracuse. Placed C James McCann on the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Geoff Hartlieb from Syracuse.	
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Selected the	

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL preseason	
Thursday's game	
New England 35, Philadelphia 0	
Friday's games	
Kansas City 17, Arizona 10 Washington 17, Cincinnati 13	
Saturday's games	
Buffalo at Chicago N.Y. Jets at Green Bay Atlanta at Miami Baltimore at Carolina Detroit at Pittsburgh Tennessee at Tampa Bay Houston at Dallas Indianapolis at Minnesota Denver at Seattle Las Vegas at L.A. Rams	
Sunday's games	
N.Y. Giants at Cleveland San Francisco at L.A. Chargers	
Monday's game	
Jacksonville at New Orleans	
Friday, Aug. 27	
Indianapolis at Detroit Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets Pittsburgh at Carolina Minnesota at Kansas City	
Saturday, Aug. 28	
Green Bay at Buffalo Baltimore at Washington Chicago at Tennessee Arizona at New Orleans Tampa Bay at Houston L.A. Rams at Denver L.A. Chargers at Seattle	
Sunday, Aug. 29	
Jacksonville at Dallas Las Vegas at San Francisco Miami at Cincinnati New England at N.Y. Giants Cleveland at Atlanta	

contract of OF Jorge Bonifacio from Lehigh Valley (Triple-A East) and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Designated RHP Mauricio Llovera for assignment.	
PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Reinstated RHP Chad Kuhl from the COVID-19 IL.	
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Activated RHP Miles Mikolas from the 60-day IL. Placed RHP Ryan Helsley on the 10-day IL, retroactive to August 17. Placed LHP Brandon Waddell from Memphis (Triple-A East) on the COVID-19 IL.	
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Reinstated LF Jurickson Profar from the 10-day IL. Transferred LHP Drew Pomeranz from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL. Placed RHP Jake Arrieta on the 10-day IL, retroactive to Aug. 19.	
BASKETBALL	
National Basketball Association	
INDIANA PACERS — Signed F Torrey Craig.	
FOOTBALL	
National Football League	
ARIZONA CARDINALS — Claimed CB Luq Barcoo off waivers from the Jacksonville Jaguars.	
ATLANTA FALCONS — Signed TE David Wells. Placed TE Ryan Becker on the injured reserve list.	
CHICAGO BEARS — Released WR Thomas Ives with an injury settlement.	
CLEVELAND BROWNS — Signed LBs Montrel Meander and Willie Harvey. Released WR JoJo Ward and Crey Taylor. Released CB Kiondre Thomas with an injury settlement.	
DALLAS COWBOYS — Placed P Hunter Niswander on the injured reserve list.	
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed WR Damon Hazelton. Released CB Dominique Martin.	
HOUSTON TEXANS — Released NT Brandon Dunn.	
MIAMI DOLPHINS — Released DB Terrell Bonds.	
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Signed K Aldrick Rosas. Released TE Josh Pederson.	
NEW YORK JETS — Signed S Bennett Jackson. Placed S Zane Lewis on the injured reserve list.	
TENNESSEE TITANS — Released OG Adam Coon with an injury settlement.	
HOCKEY	
National Hockey League	
CALGARY FLAMES — Signed D Nikita Zadorov to a one-year contract.	
NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Signed F Chase Stillman to a three-year, entry-level contract.	
WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Announced G Henrik Lundqvist's retirement.	
SOCCER	
Major League Soccer	
MLS DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE — Found San Jose Earthquakes D Nathan guilty of failure to leave the field in a timely manner in the 21st minute during a match against Minnesota United FC on Aug. 17. Found New England Revolution F Arnor Ingvi Traustason guilty of failure to leave the field in a timely manner in the 72nd minute during a match against D.C. United FC on Aug. 18.	
FC UNITED — Signed D Chris Duvall to a contract through the end of the 2021 season, with an option to extend through 2022.	
LA GALAXY — Loaned F Augustine Williams to USL Championship side San Diego Loyal SC for the remainder of the 2021 season.	
VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC — Acquired D Marcus Godinho from CF Montreal in exchange for \$50,000 in general allocation money (GAM) and he agreed to terms for the 2021 season, with options through 2023.	

AUTO RACING

Toyota 200	
NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series	
Friday At World Wide Technology Raceway at Gateway Madison, Ill.	
Lap length: 1.25 miles (Start position in parentheses)	
1. (4) Sheldon Creed, Chevrolet, 163 laps, 60 points. 2. (10) Matt Crafton, Toyota, 163, 47. 3. (7) Ben Rhodes, Toyota, 163, 51. 4. (9) Stewart Friesen, Toyota, 163, 48. 5. (20) Johnny Sauter, Toyota, 163, 32. 6. (28) Chase Purdy, Chevrolet, 163, 31. 7. (19) Hailie Deegan, Ford, 163, 30. 8. (6) Carson Hocevar, Chevrolet, 163, 29. 9. (15) Austin Wayne Self, Chevrolet, 163, 28. 10. (21) Jack Wood, Chevrolet, 163, 27. 11. (27) Tyler Hill, Chevrolet, 163, 26. 12. (26) Taylor Gray, Ford, 163, 25. 13. (18) Ryan Truex, Chevrolet, 162, 24. 14. (24) Tate Fogleman, Chevrolet, 162, 23. 15. (14) Josh Berry, Chevrolet, 162, 0. 16. (32) Spencer Boyd, Chevrolet, 161, 21. 17. (37) Cory Roper, Ford, 161, 20. 18. (22) Kris Wright, Chevrolet, 161, 19. 19. (16) Tanner Gray, Ford, 161, 18. 20. (17) Derek Kraus, Toyota, 160, 22. 21. (36) Armani Williams, Toyota, 159, 16. 22. (2) John H. Nemechek, Toyota, 158, 24. 23. (1) Austin Hill, Toyota, 157, 18. 24. (34) Roger Reuse, Ford, 157, 13. 25. (30) Grant Enfinger, Chevrolet, 154, 12. 26. (11) Derek Griffith, Toyota, 150, 11. 27. (31) Chris Hacker, Toyota, 140, 10. 28. (12) Chandler Smith, Toyota, 123, 9. 29. (3) Todd Gilliland, Ford, garage, 120, 13. 30. (38) Dawson Cram, Chevrolet, accident, 117, 7. 31. (8) Christian Eckes, Toyota, accident, 113, 8. 32. (13) Tyler Ankrum, Chevrolet, accident, 112, 8. 33. (25) Ty Majeski, Toyota, accident, 112, 15. 34. (29) Jake Griffin, Chevrolet, accident, 112, 3. 35. (5) Zane Smith, Chevrolet, reargear, 99, 9. 36. (23) Danny Bohn, Toyota, engine, 94, 1. 37. (33) Jordan Anderson, Chevrolet, engine, 68, 1. 38. (35) Jennifer Jo Cobb, Ford, engine, 28, 1.	

YOUTH BASEBALL

Little League World Series	
At Williamsport, Pa.	
HANK AARON WEST A, Honolulu, Hawaii; MIDWEST A, Hastings, Neb.; GREAT LAKES A, Taylor, Mich.; NORTHWEST A, Sammamish, Wash.; NEW ENGLAND B, Manchester, Conn.; MID-ATLANTIC B, Toms River, N.J.; SOUTHEAST B, Palm City, Fla.; SOUTH-WEST B, Abilene, Texas	
TOM SEAVER SOUTHEAST A, Nolensville, Tenn.; NEW ENGLAND A, Hooksett, N.H.; MID-ATLANTIC A, Oaks, Pa.; SOUTHWEST A, Lafayette, La.; GREAT LAKES B, Hamilton, Ohio; WEST B, Torrance, Calif.; NORTHWEST B, Lake Oswego, Ore.; MIDWEST B, Sioux Falls, S.D.	
Double Elimination	
Thursday, Aug. 19	
Game 1: Hawaii 9, Connecticut 1 Game 2: Ohio 1, Tennessee 0 Game 3: Nebraska 5, New Jersey 2 Game 4: California 10, New Hampshire 2	
Friday, Aug. 20	
Game 5: Oregon 8, Pennsylvania 2 Game 6: Michigan 8, Florida 0 Game 7: South Dakota 2, Louisiana 0 Game 8: Texas 6, Washington 0	
Saturday, Aug. 21	
Game 9: Tennessee vs. New Hampshire Game 10: Connecticut vs. New Jersey Game 11: Florida vs. Washington Game 12: Pennsylvania vs. Louisiana	
Sunday, Aug. 22	
Game 13: California vs. Ohio Game 14: Hawaii vs. Nebraska Game 15: Michigan vs. Game 8 winner Game 16: Oregon vs. South Dakota	

GOLF

The Northern Trust		Women's British Open	
PGA Tour		LPGA Tour	
Friday		Friday	
At Liberty National Golf Club Jersey City, N.J.		At Carnoustie Golf Links Carnoustie, Scotland	
Yardage: 7,410; Par: 71 Purse: \$9.5 Million		Purse: \$4.5 million Yardage: 6,737; Par: 72	
Second Round		Second Round	
Jon Rahm	63-67-130 -12	Mina Harigae	70-67-137 -7
Tony Finau	67-64-131 -11	Georgia Hall	68-69-137 -7
Justin Thomas	63-69-132 -10	Lizette Salas	69-69-138 -6
Keith Mitchell	68-64-132 -10	Sei Young Kim	67-71-138 -6
Xander Schauffele	70-62-132 -10	Moriya Jutanugarn	72-67-139 -5
Kevin Na	67-66-133 -9	Leona Maguire	72-67-139 -5
Alex Noren	69-64-133 -9	Wichanee Meechai	71-68-139 -5
Harold Varner III	66-67-133 -9	Yealimi Noh	70-69-139 -5

GOLF/SPORTS BRIEFS

Rahm up 1 shot after 2 rounds

Still complains about playoff format

By Doug Ferguson
Associated Press
JERSEY CITY, N.J. — Jon Rahm is young enough at 26 that the FedEx Cup has been a big part of the PGA Tour as long as he has been chasing his dreams, and winning the trophy would mean a lot to him.

He just doesn't like the way it works, and building a one-shot lead Friday in The Northern Trust was only a reminder that great golf doesn't really mean much without a great finish. "I don't like it. I don't think it's fair," Rahm said Friday after another bogey-free round at Liberty National, this one a 4-under 67 for a one-shot lead over Tony Finau. What never made sense to him was someone who could win the all the postseason tournaments and then finish with a dud at the Tour Championship and "you can end up with a really bad finish." The PGA Tour was trying to create drama among more than a few players at the final event. This is the postseason, and the

example often cited was the New England Patriots going undefeated until losing the Super Bowl. Rahm had an answer for that, too. "They still finished second," he said. For now, Rahm can only worry about the tournament at hand, and while he has produced a mixture of great shots and great saves to reach 12-under 130, he still has his hands full. "Believe it or not, hit my fair share of bad shots today," Rahm said. "Much like yesterday, I was able to save a couple of good ones. ... Coming into the weekend, I'm definitely going to have to clean a couple of those mistakes up." Finau had a 64 with a bogey on the final hole as he tries to secure another spot among the 30 who make it to the season-ending Tour Championship, along with boosting his bid to play his way onto another Ryder Cup team. Olympic gold medalist Xander Schauffele tied his personal best



Spain's Jon Rahm lines up his shot on the 12th green Friday during the second round of the Northern Trust at Liberty National Golf Course in Jersey City, N.J. Rahm has a one-stroke lead over Tony Finau. JOHN MINCHILLO/AP

on the PGA Tour and the course record at Liberty National with a 62 and was in the group at 10-under 132 along with Justin Thomas (69) and Keith Mitchell (64). Thomas, who shared the 18-hole lead with Rahm, couldn't figure out which way the ball was going in making four bogeys in eight holes, only to play his last five holes in 5 under — that included an eagle at the par-5 eighth — to stay in the mix. Mitchell did his work at the start of his round by running off six straight birdies, a streak that ended on the 18th hole as he made the turn. He took two shots to get out of a longer bunker and made double bogey on No. 7, only to close with two birdies. More is it stake for Mitchell, who is No. 101 in the FedEx Cup and needs a high finish to be

among the top 70 who advance to next week at the BMW Championship. Jordan Spieth got back in the game with a consecutive eagles — he holed out from the fairway on the par-4 fifth and holed a chip from the edge of the water on the par-5 sixth — and tied the course record himself at 62. That left him four behind, along with Brooks Koepka (64).

BRIEFLY

Fitzgerald says he doesn't have 'urge to play'

Associated Press
TEMPE, Ariz. — Arizona Cardinals 11-time Pro Bowl receiver Larry Fitzgerald says he currently doesn't have the desire to play an 18th NFL season, though he left the possibility open that he might resume his career. In an interview on SiriusXM Radio with Jim Gray on Mad Dog Sports Radio — set to air Friday afternoon — Fitzgerald said he's currently focused on being a radio broadcaster. "To be honest with you I just don't have the urge to play right now," Fitzgerald said in the interview. "I don't know how I'll feel in September, October, November moving forward but I just, today, I just don't have that urge. And I think I have to be respectful of that. Football is not one of those games you want to walk out there and play and not be fully engaged and ready to prepare and do the things necessary that you need to do." The 37-year-old has put together 17 of the most consistent and productive seasons for a wide receiver in NFL history. He hasn't been at the Cardinals' preseason camp in Glendale, Ariz., over the past month. Coach Kliff Kingsbury and teammates have consistently said they're not



Fitzgerald

sure of Fitzgerald's football plans. The Cardinals signed veteran receiver A.J. Green during the offseason. **Creed wins Truck playoff opener** MADISON, Ill. — Defending series champion Sheldon Creed won the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series playoff opener Friday night with a dominating run at Gateway. In a race interrupted by a power outage that knocked out the lights for about an hour early in the second stage, Creed swept the stages and led 142 of 163 laps on the 1.25-mile oval. The 23-year-old California driver wrapped up an automatic spot in the next three-race round of the playoffs, winning for the second time this year and seventh in two seasons. After a caution set up an overtime shootout, Creed kept the No. 2 GMS Racing Chevrolet ahead of Matt Crafton and Ben Rhodes — with three-time series champion Crafton passing ThorSport teammate Ben Rhodes for second. Creed beat Crafton by 0.292 seconds. Stewart Friesen was fourth, with the top four all in the 10-driver playoff field. **Auburn's Harsin tests positive** AUBURN, Ala. — Auburn football coach Bryan Harsin said Friday that he has tested

positive for COVID-19 and is isolating at home. Harsin said in a statement that he tested positive on Thursday but wasn't experiencing symptoms. The first-year Tigers coach said he will participate remotely in meetings and practices. Assistant head coach Jeff Schmedding, who works with linebackers, will take over as interim coach for in-person duties. Auburn opens the season Sept. 4 against Akron. **US women win hockey opener** CALGARY, Alberta — Brianna Decker and Kendall Coyne Schofield each had a goal and an assist and the nine-time champion United States beat Switzerland 3-0 on Friday night to open the women's world hockey championship. The tournament began with the Beijing Olympics less than six months away. The world championship was last played in 2019 in Finland, with the United States winning its fifth straight title. The pandemic twice forced the cancellation of the event in Nova Scotia. Grace Zumwinkle also scored for the United States and Alex Cavallini made 10 saves. Andrea Braendli stopped 55 shots for Switzerland. Earlier in the first Group A game, Sarah Fillier broke a tie midway through the third

period and Canada rallied to beat Finland 5-3. In the lone Group B game of the day, Alena Mills had three goals and an assist in the Czech Republic's 6-1 victory over Denmark. All five teams in Group A and the top three in Group B will advance to the quarterfinals. **Kentucky players plead not guilty** LEXINGTON, Ky. — Six Kentucky football players charged with first-degree burglary pleaded not guilty on Friday, with a judge scheduling a preliminary hearing for Wednesday in a case stemming from a March 6 incident at a private party. Fayette County District Judge Joseph T. Bouvier also ordered the players to stay away from the victims and the site where the incident took place. Wildcats players Reuben Adams, Robert McClain, Andru Phillips, Earnest Sanders IV, Devito Tisdale and Joel Williams are charged with burglary. Tisdale also faces a charge of first-degree wanton endangerment for allegedly pointing a gun at one of the victims. Court documents obtained by The Associated Press state that the players had "a physical altercation with multiple occupants of the residence," which left many of the occupants injured. Summonses were issued for the players.

MLB

Anderson lifts White Sox past Rays in 11

BY MARK DIDTLER
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Tim Anderson keeps on getting clutch hits for the Chicago White Sox.

Anderson had a game-tying homer in the ninth and a tiebreaking RBI single in the 11th as the White Sox beat the Tampa Bay Rays 7-5 Friday night in a matchup of AL division leaders.

“The heart and soul of our team,” Chicago starting pitcher Lucas Giolito said,

After Tampa Bay’s Andrew Kittredge (8-2) worked a perfect 10th, Anderson opened the 11th with a hit and scored on a fielder’s choice grounder by José Abreu to make it 7-5.

“We got burned by a good player,” Tampa Bay manager Kevin Cash said. “It was a tense game. We anticipated that with two clubs that are sitting 70-plus wins right now.”

Abreu has 91 RBIs.

Liam Hendriks (8-3) got out of a jam in the 10th with a man on third and one out. Ryan Tepera worked the 11th and earned his second save.

After blowing a two-run lead in the eighth inning, Anderson pulled the White Sox even at 5-all with a leadoff homer in the ninth off JT Chargois.

Anderson, who went 3-for-6, had a walk-off homer to beat the New York Yankees in the “Field of Dreams” game in Dyersville, Iowa, on Aug. 12.

“There’s no better shortstop in the whole league when you talk about his complete game,” White Sox manager Tony La Russa said. “Watch this game and it’s all you will need to know about this greatness,”

Chicago reliever Craig Kimbrel began the eighth by throwing seven straight balls, including a walk to Manuel Margot. After Kimbrel struck out Mike Zunino for the second out, Aaron Bummer entered and walked pinch-hitter Randy Arozarena, gave up Wander Franco’s RBI in



STEVE NESIUS/AP

Tampa Bay Rays catcher Mike Zunino, right, holds the ball after missing the tag on the Chicago White Sox’s Tim Anderson as he scores from third base on a ground ball hit by Joe Abreu during the fifth inning on Friday in St. Petersburg, Fla.

field single and Austin Meadows’ two-run base hit that put the East-leading Rays ahead 5-4.

Meadows has driven in 85 runs.

“This one sting a little bit because we had such a great comeback,” Kittredge said. “So, yeah, it hurts.”

The Rays tops the majors with 242 runs in the

seventh inning or later but are 5-11 in extra innings.

Giolito gave up two runs and three hits with eight strikeouts in seven innings, and Yoán Moncada hit a two-run homer for the Central-leading White Sox. Chicago was 1-for-15 with runners in scoring position through 10 innings.

ROUNDUP

Braves beat O’s, extend win streak to seven

Associated Press

Travis d’Arnaud celebrated his new contract with a two-run homer, Jorge Soler also went deep and the Atlanta Braves beat Baltimore 3-0 Friday night, extending their winning streak to seven games while handing the Orioles their 16th straight defeat.

Max Fried (11-7) allowed four hits in his first career nine-inning complete game, and the NL East-leading Braves matched a modern-era, single-season franchise record with their 11th consecutive road win. The last time that happened was in 1956, when the team was based in Milwaukee.

Baltimore’s losing streak is its second-longest since moving from St. Louis in 1954, topped only by the 1988 team’s 0-21 start.

Before the game, d’Arnaud signed a two-year, \$16 million extension with a club option for 2024. The 32-year-old catcher rewarded Atlanta for its show of faith, crushing a second-inning pitch from Keegan Akin (0-8).

Yankees 10, Twins 2: Luke Voit finished with a homer, four



MITCHELL LAYTON/TNS

Atlanta’s Jorge Soler celebrates his solo home run against the Orioles on Friday in Baltimore.

hits and four RBIs, and surging New York beat visiting Minnesota for its season-high eighth straight win.

Athletics 4, Giants 1: Josh Harrison hit a two-run single, Starling Marte added an RBI double, and host Oakland dealt San Francisco

its first consecutive losses since late July.

Dodgers 3, Mets 2: Trea Turner had two hits and two runs, Walker Buehler pitched two-run ball into the eighth inning and Los Angeles won its eighth straight by beating visiting New York.

Red Sox 6, Rangers 0: Chris Sale pitched five shutout innings in his second outing since Tommy John surgery to help host Boston beat Texas.

Royals 6, Cubs 2: Salvador Perez hit two of Kansas City’s five home runs in a win over Chicago, which has lost 11 straight home games.

Reds 5, Marlins 3: Sonny Gray pitched one-hit ball through seven scoreless innings, Tyler Naquin and Joey Votto homered in the fifth, and host Cincinnati beat Miami.

Indians 9, Angels 1: Franmil Reyes hit a towering three-run homer and tied his career high with five RBIs, powering host Cleveland past Los Angeles.

Tigers 4, Blue Jays 1 (10): Pinch-hitter Harold Castro sin-

gled home the go-ahead run in the 10th inning and visiting Detroit beat Toronto.

Astros 12, Mariners 3: Yordan Álvarez homered and had four RBIs as host Houston jumped on Yusei Kikuchi early and cruised to a win over Seattle.

Pirates 4, Cardinals 0: Mitch Keller struck out six over five solid innings, Gregory Polanco drove in two runs and Pittsburgh topped host St. Louis to snap a five-game skid.

Nationals 4, Brewers 1: Patrick Corbin pitched three-hit ball into the seventh inning and visiting Washington topped Milwaukee.

Rockies 9, Diamondbacks 4: At Denver, Pinch-hitter Sam Hilliard hit a go-ahead RBI triple in the sixth inning, Garrett Hampson homered and Colorado defeated Arizona.

Phillies 4, Padres 3: Bryce Harper hit a two-run homer and visiting Philadelphia snapped a four-game losing streak with a win over San Diego in a matchup of struggling teams.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	75	48	.610	—
New York	71	52	.577	4
Boston	70	54	.565	5½
Toronto	63	57	.525	10½
Baltimore	38	83	.314	36

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	72	51	.585	—
Cleveland	59	61	.492	11½
Detroit	59	65	.476	13½
Minnesota	54	69	.439	18
Kansas City	53	68	.438	18

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	72	50	.590	—
Oakland	70	53	.569	2½
Seattle	66	57	.537	6½
Los Angeles	62	62	.500	11
Texas	42	80	.344	30

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	66	56	.541	—
Philadelphia	62	60	.508	4
New York	60	62	.492	6
Washington	53	68	.438	12½
Miami	51	72	.415	15½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	74	49	.602	—
Cincinnati	67	57	.540	7½
St. Louis	62	59	.512	11
Chicago	54	70	.435	20½
Pittsburgh	43	79	.352	30½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	78	44	.639	—
Los Angeles	77	46	.626	1½
San Diego	67	57	.540	12
Colorado	56	66	.459	22
Arizona	41	82	.333	37½

Friday’s games

Kansas City 6, Chicago Cubs 2
Atlanta 3, Baltimore 0
N.Y. Yankees 10, Minnesota 2
Cleveland 9, L.A. Angels 1
Detroit 4, Toronto 1 (10)
Boston 6, Texas 0
Chicago White Sox 7, Tampa Bay 5 (11)
Houston 12, Seattle 3
Oakland 4, San Francisco 1
Cincinnati 5, Miami 3
Pittsburgh 4, St. Louis 0
Washington 4, Milwaukee 1
Colorado 9, Arizona 4
L.A. Dodgers 3, N.Y. Mets 2
Philadelphia 4, San Diego 3

Saturday’s games

Minnesota at N.Y. Yankees
Chicago White Sox at Tampa Bay
Kansas City at Chicago Cubs
Detroit at Toronto
L.A. Angels at Cleveland
Seattle at Houston
Atlanta at Baltimore
Texas at Boston
N.Y. Mets at L.A. Dodgers
Washington at Milwaukee
San Francisco at Oakland
Miami at Cincinnati
Pittsburgh at St. Louis
Arizona at Colorado
Philadelphia at San Diego

Sunday’s games

Atlanta (Toussaint 2-2) at Baltimore (Means 5-5)
Minnesota (Jax 3-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Gil 1-0)
Detroit (Hutchison 0-1) at Toronto (Matz 10-7)
Chicago White Sox (López 2-0) at Tampa Bay (Archer 0-1)
Texas (Allard 3-10) at Boston (Eovaldi 10-8)
Seattle (Anderson 6-8) at Houston (Valdez 8-4)
Kansas City (Hernández 3-1) at Chicago Cubs (Mills 5-5)
San Francisco (Webb 7-3) at Oakland (Montas 9-9)
L.A. Angels (Suarez 5-6) at Cleveland (Quattrill 3-2)
Miami (Alcantara 7-11) at Cincinnati (Gutierrez 8-4)
Washington (Nolin 0-1) at Milwaukee (Houser 7-5)
Pittsburgh (Brault 0-1) at St. Louis (Wainwright 11-7)
Arizona (Widener 1-1) at Colorado (Gray 7-9)
Philadelphia (Gibson 8-5) at San Diego (TBD)
N.Y. Mets (Stroman 8-12) at L.A. Dodgers (Price 4-1)

Monday’s games

Chicago White Sox at Toronto
N.Y. Yankees at Atlanta
Kansas City at Houston
Seattle at Oakland
Arizona at Pittsburgh
Colorado at Chicago Cubs

MLB/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Athletics continue ballpark plans in Oakland, Las Vegas

By JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Athletics are proceeding with “parallel paths” planning new ballparks in Oakland and Las Vegas, determined to find the best fit and relocate if the club can’t secure what it wants along the downtown waterfront Howard Terminal site.

Team president Dave Kaval is planning another trip to Las Vegas soon — traveling there every couple of weeks, he said — to evaluate the options with that potential spot. He spoke on the field Friday ahead of the A’s hosting the San Francisco Giants in the Bay Bridge Series at the Coliseum, a site he still insists is not right for baseball going forward.

“I think we’ve been really clear, I think the league’s been really clear that this site does not fit the 21st century vision for baseball in North America,” Kaval said. “You need a downtown urban location to be successful, especially in a two-team market where you have the Giants in a similar stadium on the waterfront, and we’re going to do everything we can to have a stadium that can be at the level or eclipse what they have at Oracle Park in San Francisco. And we have that vision down at Howard Terminal.”

On July 20, the Oakland City Council approved preliminary terms for a \$12 billion waterfront ballpark project. The A’s weren’t satisfied with that proposal, however.

“We still remain apart on the

DID YOU KNOW?

The A’s are the last professional franchise remaining in Oakland after the NBA’s Golden State Warriors relocated to San Francisco and the NFL’s Raiders to Las Vegas.

SOURCE: Associated Press

economic terms,” Kaval said, focusing currently on the environmental review process and keeping that progress going.

In May, Major League Baseball instructed Oakland’s brass to explore relocation options if no ballpark agreement could be reached.

“We remain disappointed that they didn’t vote on our plan, so that has not changed,” Kaval said. “By the same token, we’re still hopeful to make progress on negotiations with them. But time will tell how that plays out. We’re still getting all the other processes working and hopefully finalized. We’re doing everything we can to make that happen in an acceptable timeline for the league.”

The earliest possible scenario Kaval envisions a vote by the city is “later this year.”

The team’s project plan calls for a \$1 billion privately financed 35,000-seat waterfront ballpark at Howard Terminal, 3,000 residential units, office and retail space, hotel rooms and an indoor performance center.

The A’s lease at the aging Coliseum runs through 2024. MLB has said rebuilding at the current location is not a viable option.



A view of the field in Oakland, Calif., at RingCentral Coliseum on April 1, a site that Athletics team president Dave Kaval says “does not fit the 21st century vision for baseball in North America.”



Maryland head coach Mike Locksley launched the National Coalition for Minority Football Coaches a little more than a year ago, during a tumultuous summer of racial reckoning in the United States, envisioning an organization that could address the dearth of Black and other minority head coaches in college football.

Minority coaches coalition putting words to action

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

Maryland coach Mike Locksley launched the National Coalition for Minority Football Coaches a little more than a year ago, during a tumultuous summer of racial reckoning in the United States.

The timing wasn’t necessarily part of Locksley’s plan.

Long before the death of George Floyd sparked protests across the country, the veteran coach had envisioned an organization that could address a problem that has plagued college football for decades: A dearth of Black and other minority head coaches.

While the spotlight has dimmed somewhat amid the pandemic, the coalition is showing signs it was built to last and do more than just talk about the need for change.

Locksley said the coalition was regularly engaged during the last hiring cycle by colleges and NFL teams looking for candidates. A year later, the coalition has created a mentorship program, matching rising coaches with influential administrators, and is building a bank of analytics-based profiles that can be used to match potential candidates with specific openings.

“I think the first thing you have to establish is the credibility as an organization to where people know and understand who you are, what the goal, what the mission is,” Locksley said. “And I think we did a really good job of branding ourselves as a entity that has the ability to be a resource for hiring and diversity in hiring.”

Oregon, Oregon State to require vaccination proof to attend games

Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — Oregon and Oregon State became the first Power Five schools to announce they will require proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test for people over the age of 12 to attend football games.

In its announcement Friday, Oregon said the decision was made with public health authorities and “peer institutions in the state.”

The mandate goes into effect Monday and comes at the end of a week when state officials warned of rapidly filling hospitals as daily reported cases reached record numbers.

Oregon is one of several Pac-12 schools that is requiring students and employees to be vaccinated or apply for an exemption.

The moves come about a week after Tulane in New Orleans became the first school that plays football at the NCAA’s highest subdivision to require proof of vaccine or negative test to attend sporting events.

Tulane’s decision followed a mandate set by city officials that also impacts the NFL’s Saints.

An NCAA report released in March showed that when it comes to the hiring of minority coaches at the highest levels of college football there has been some progress over the last decade among coordinators and assistants.

At the Power Five conference level, the percentage of minority head football coaches rose from 12% in 2011-12 to 21% in 2019-20. The percentage of minority head coaches in non-Power Five FBS conferences dropped from 21% to 9% over that same span.

There was a total of 20 minority head coaches in FBS during the 2019 season, 13 of them Black, according to the NCAA. Heading into this season, there are 21 minority head coaches, 13 of them Black, among 130 FBS schools.

Meanwhile, the percentage of minority players in FBS has grown from about 60% to more than 65% over the nine years covered by the NCAA’s report.

The broader conversation about racial inequities may be quieter than it was last year, but the 51-year Locksley knows this issue is evergreen.

“As I moved to what I call the back nine of my career and my give-a-crap gauge was on E, if I can create a pathway or something that makes it easier for the next group of Mike Locksleys coming through this profession, then I want to do that,” he said.

NFL

COMMENTARY

Raiders setting example for US

Fans in stands must be vaccinated

By PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press

The Raiders have always prided themselves on being a maverick franchise, so maybe it wasn't too surprising that they were the first NFL team to take such a bold — yet obvious — step.

Now every other sports team — both college and pro — should follow the lead of the Silver & Black and require spectators to get vaccinated.

Amid a surge of coronavirus cases as the highly contagious delta variant spreads across the United States, Las Vegas' football team announced this week that all fans must show proof of a jab to attend games.

"Health and safety has always been our No. 1 priority," Raiders owner Mark Davis said. "This policy ensures that we will be able to operate at full capacity without masks for fully vaccinated fans for the entire season."

The idea of having a packed stadium for the entire season seems out of touch with reality, given that each day brings another six-figure round of new COVID-19 cases in the U.S. And while we're at it, we

wish Davis and others weren't so eager to dump masks, a cheap, relatively low-hassle way to stifle the spread of the virus.

But requiring vaccinations — or at least a negative COVID-19 test — for fans to attend a sporting event is the most logical, effective way to deal with the spike of new cases just weeks before the start of the NFL and college football seasons.

Beyond the Raiders, there are glimmers of hope.

The city of New Orleans enacted new rules last week for indoor arenas and entertainment venues that require anyone attending a Saints game at the Superdome to provide proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of kickoff.

Masks also will be required.

"We are committed to doing everything we can in the current environment to protect your health and safety while at the same time providing the best game day experience in the NFL," the Saints told their fans. "We understand some will be frustrated, as are we, that we find ourselves in this position."

Tulane, a private college in the Big Easy and member of Ameri-



DAVID BECKER/AP

Las Vegas Raiders fans watch practice on July 31 in Henderson, Nev. Vaccine verification is becoming a coronavirus fighting front in Nevada. Las Vegas' biggest trade conference on Tuesday followed the Raiders in announcing they'll require attendees to prove they've gotten a COVID-19 inoculation.

can Athletic Conference, said it will have the same vaccination and testing requirements to attend its home sporting events, even though its football stadium is an outdoor facility.

The Green Wave thus became the first major college football program to make such a move.

On Friday, others followed their lead.

Both Oregon and Oregon State of the Pac-12 said anyone ages 12 and older attending a university event — yep, that includes football — would need a vaccine or negative test to get in.

Hawaii, a member of the Mountain West, won't have any fans at its home football games, at least to

start the season. Honolulu officials issued the ban due to a rising number of COVID-19 cases in the state and hospitals being overwhelmed, though they plan to re-evaluate that decision in coming weeks.

New Orleans' requirements will allow the 73,000-seat Superdome to operate at full capacity during football season, which wasn't permitted last year as the entire sports world limited how many fans could attend games to preserve social distancing.

Those policies have largely been lifted in U.S. sports, as teams and colleges try to make up for the billions in lost revenue since the start of the pandemic.

So, let's applaud NFL teams such as the Raiders and the Saints, and colleges such as Oregon, Oregon State and Tulane for their stances. And let's keep pushing for leagues and college conferences to impose a universal vaccination mandate for fans to come through the gates.

Major League Baseball could get on board. NASCAR and IndyCar, too. And let's not forget the NBA and NHL, which will be beginning new seasons in a few short months.

We need sports to provide the sort of unified — and, hopefully, unifying — approach that might finally get this pandemic under control.

Surplus: Cobb's return has raised intensity level among receivers

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or something 'Quez could have done better, Allen could have done better."

Cobb, who previously played for the Packers from 2011-18, returned to Green Bay at the start of training camp in a trade that sent an undisclosed draft pick to the Houston Texans.

Adams believes the arrival of another veteran has raised the level of intensity among receivers in training camp. He said "this year has been the most competitive that room has been probably since I first got here."

Indeed, Cobb's addition meant there was one fewer available spot for a receiver on the roster, creating one of the Packers' most intriguing position battles heading into their second preseason game, a weekend matchup against the New York Jets.

Adams is the clear-cut No. 1 receiver after becoming the first player in NFL history to collect at least 100 overall catches and 18



MATT LUDTKE/AP

Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, right, shares a laugh with wide receivers Davante Adams and Randall Cobb during training camp.

touchdown receptions in the same season last year. Valdes-Scantling is back after leading the NFL in yards per catch last season. Cobb joins a group that also features Lazard and Rodgers.

That leaves Devin Funchess,

Equanimous St. Brown, Malik Taylor, Juwann Winfree, Reggie Begelton and Chris Blair potentially competing for just one open roster spot. The Packers added one more player to the mix Friday by signing Damon Hazelton, an

undrafted rookie free agent from Missouri who was released by the Houston Texans last week.

"As you guys have probably documented, there's five guys who probably have a spot sewn up," quarterback Aaron Rodgers told reporters this week. "I'm not sure if we're going to keep six, keep seven. Do we keep two quarterbacks, three quarterbacks? It allows for extra spots at some of those places. If it is six, there's a lot of guys in the mix."

Funchess is the most experienced receiver outside that top five after catching 21 touchdown passes for Carolina from 2015-18, but he fractured his collarbone while playing for Indianapolis in the 2019 opener and hasn't played a regular-season game since. He caught six passes for 70 yards in the Packers' 26-7 preseason loss to Houston last week but injured his hamstring in practice Wednesday.

St. Brown caught 21 passes as a rookie in 2018, missed the 2019 season with an ankle injury and had seven receptions plus a touch-

down last year. Taylor caught five passes and scored one touchdown last season.

Taylor had five receptions for 50 yards against Houston while St. Brown and Winfree were out with injuries.

"Obviously Funch had a big night the other night," Aaron Rodgers said. "Malik was on the active roster last year. EQ was on the active roster last year. Reggie did a nice job on the (practice) squad most of the year and has come back and been a better player. Juwann Winfree has had one of the better offseasons, one of the most improved guys. There's a lot of opportunity for those spots."

Those receivers were likely be catching passes from Kurt Benkert and Jake Dolegala on Saturday because Jordan Love was doubtful with a shoulder injury and the Packers don't plan to use Aaron Rodgers in any preseason games.

But even if the game didn't feature much star power, it had plenty of importance for receivers seeking to prove their value.

SPORTS



FedEx Cup playoffs
Spain's Rahm one stroke up
in Northern Trust » **Page 20**

NFL



Packers receiver
Randall Cobb pulls
in a pass during
training camp in
Green Bay, Wis.
PHOTOS BY MATT LUDTKE/AP

Surplus receivers

With Cobb added to the mix, Green Bay short on roster spots for wideouts

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Green Bay Packers wideout Davante Adams says the addition of veteran Randall Cobb has made it easier to provide leadership to the team's younger receivers. But it's also made it tougher for those receivers to crack the 53-man roster. Adams said much of what he learned came from watching Cobb and Jordy Nelson earlier in his career.

Adams noted that he doesn't have to be the only veteran offering advice to teammates such as Marquez Valdes-Scantling, Allen Lazard or rookie Amari Rodgers because Cobb can make similar points. "A lot of times I don't have to even say that much because he's saying the same thing," the All-Pro receiver said. "Sometimes I'll look over to him and we'll be like, 'You want to say it or me?' And he'll jump in and give his two cents about Amari's route

SEE SURPLUS ON PAGE 23

Davante Adams, right, says Cobb's addition has made it easier to provide leadership to younger receivers.



Braves top Orioles, stretch winning streak to 7 games » MLB, Page 21