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Free to Deployed Areas



Performance imbalance

Army reports significant gender gap with fitness test failure rate

By MISSY RYAN
The Washington Post

An Army initiative to create a stronger, fitter fighting force has yielded a dramatic gender gap, raising questions about whether the service might unintentionally compound barriers for women trying to move up the ranks.

Recent Army figures show that 54% of female soldiers failed the new Army Combat Fitness Test, which is being rolled out on a provisional basis, compared with 7% of men during the second quarter of 2020.

That reflects a significant improve-

ment over last year, when leaked data showed that over 80% of a smaller cohort of female test-takers failed the six-event exam. But some women fear they won't be able to pass even with additional training or will continue to score lower than men, potentially affecting their career prospects in an institution already struggling to shed historical gender and racial disparities.

The test, which will become the service's official fitness test next month, has prompted a broader debate over whether the service's focus on fitness and strength will elevate physical

SEE TEST ON PAGE 4

DOD leaders aim to reduce bias in service promotions

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Top leaders for each of the Defense Department's military services are working to remove all personal identifying information from promotions packets, the top U.S. military officer said Thursday.

The top uniformed officers and the civilian secretaries of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force have agreed to remove not just official photographs but also other personal identifiers from promotions packets, such as name, gender and racial information, said Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The changes come as the Pentagon has faced criticism that its highest ranks lack diversity, and the military works to promote inclusion.

"We are the world's biggest meritocracy. We take great pride in that," Milley said during a virtual town hall session at the Pentagon alongside Defense Secretary Mark Esper and the military's top enlisted service member, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman Ramon Colon-Lopez. "Certainly, we have areas to improve in, but on balance, we recognize that knowledge, skills, attributes and the content of your character are what should advance you in the system, not any particular personal identity or characteristics."

Removing personal information from promotions boards should remove any biases members of those boards might have, whether conscious or unconscious, Milley said.

The decisions are part of a wide-ranging look at diversity in the military, which Esper ordered in June as civil unrest against systemic racism and police brutality spread across the nation. The following month, the defense secretary ordered the military to take steps to remove photos from promotions processes, but some

SEE PROMOTIONS ON PAGE 3

A U.S. soldier tests her grip and arm strength with a leg tuck during the Army Combat Fitness Test in Grafenwoehr, Germany, in July.

ZACHARY STAHLBERG/U.S. Army

BUSINESS/WEATHER

IPOs head for banner year on stock market high

Associated Press

Companies that cater to the "new normal" of working and shopping from home are rushing to go public.

2020 could turn out to be the best year for the IPO market in two decades. Newly public companies have piggybacked on the broader stock market, which made a soaring recovery in spring and summer after COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdowns derailed the longest bull run in history.

As investors shifted their focus to equities, private companies searching for funding took notice.

"A lot of companies sitting on the sidelines waiting to go public really used this as an opportunity," said Lindsey Bell, chief investment strategist at Ally Invest.

Through August, 143 companies went public and brought in more than \$50.4 billion in proceeds, the most since 2014. Ally Invest projects up to 206 compa-

nies could go public by the end of the year, with proceeds from IPOs hitting \$72 billion.

Technology companies have been well represented in the IPO market this year, especially companies that are positioned to take advantage of the shift to working and shopping from home. Snowflake, a cloud-based data company, saw its stock value double from its initial price, making it worth more than \$70 billion in its debut. The company is backed by Salesforce and Berkshire Hathaway.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Switzerland (Franc)	
Euro costs (Sept. 28)	\$1.14	Thailand (Baht)	0.9287
Dollar buys (Sept. 28)	€0.8369	Turkey (Lira)	31.64
British pound (Sept. 28)	\$1.24	(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.)	
Japanese yen (Sept. 28)	103.00	INTEREST RATES	
South Korean won (Sept. 28)	1,140.00	Prime rate	3.25
Commercial rates		Discount rate	0.25
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3772	Federal funds market rate	0.09
British pound	\$1.2716	3-month bill	0.10
Canada (Dollar)	1.3388	30-year bond	1.40
China (Yuan)	6.8281		
Denmark (Krone)	6.4001		
Egypt (Pound)	15.7169		
Euro	\$1.1635/0.8595		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7502		
Hungary (Forint)	312.30		
Israel (Shekel)	3.4779		
Japan (Yen)	105.60		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3065		
Norway (Krone)	9.5798		
Philippines (Peso)	48.47		
Poland (Zloty)	3.91		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7510		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3782		
South Korea (Won)	1,176.44		

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RELOCATION GUIDE

Every Friday in the European and Pacific editions of Stars and Stripes AND online daily at www.stripes.com/relo

MILITARY

3 Camp Lejeune families sue firms over condition of homes

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Lakin Lewis said she kept her newborn baby's bottles in sealed, plastic bags in her cabinets to keep roaches from crawling across them.

Lindsey Johnson said her family suffered continuous water leaks from the electrical system in their house. But instead of finding the cause, maintenance staff told her not to let the children plug cords into the outlet.

The Burn family said pink and black mold grew and spread along a window frame in their daughter's bedroom.

Those claims are part of a lawsuit filed Friday by the three Marine Corps families that manage housing at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The military families claim Lendlease Group, an Australia-based multinational company, and its partner, WinnCompanies, based in Boston, put profits before maintenance and the families' homes were plagued with mold growth and water leaks, and maintenance workers were either unwilling or unqualified to repair the conditions.

"The facts are checking out when the family says, 'I've got water intrusion,' and we send someone out to meet with them, it's really happening," said John Hughes, an attorney with Wallace and Graham, one of four law firms involved with the lawsuit. "The service member, he may be off on assignment or might be overseas, and this is not something that he needs to have on his mind while he's trying to defend the country."

The claims in the suit are similar to those made by other military families living at bases across the country who have filed lawsuits to combat poor housing conditions despite pledges from private housing companies, the military and Congress that making base housing safe and habitable is a top priority. The extent of the poor quality of housing in the military first surfaced two years ago with a Reuters investigation that uncovered the sometimes-dangerous conditions of base housing.

There are now at least eight ongoing lawsuits in courts across the country filed by residents of military family housing. Nine families at Fort Hood, Texas, also filed a lawsuit against Lendlease in June for similar problems.

Other bases where the private housing companies face ongoing litigation include MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.; Fort Bragg, N.C.; Randolph Air Force Base, Texas; and Fort Meade, Md. While at least two cases related to mold in military housing have seen their day in court, nearly all remain in the pretrial phase, which can take years.

Lendlease's Atlantic Marine Corps Communities, a subsidiary company also named in the suit, said they are "reviewing the complaint," according to a statement from a company spokesperson. It total, the company manages nearly 8,000 homes at eight military bases in four East Coast states.

"As is true in any instance, we have strict protocols in place to ensure any concerns are assessed and remediated appropriately and expeditiously," according to the statement. "Our residents' safety,



Mold at their housing at Camp Lejeune, N.C., is detailed in a lawsuit filed by 1st Sgt. Scott Johnson and his spouse, Lindsey Johnson. They are joined in the suit by two other Marine families.

health, and well-being are our top priority. As such, we stand by our strong track record, providing quality homes for service members and their families. Due to the pendency of this matter, we are unable to provide any further details or comment at this time."

The 70-page complaint filed in the Eastern District of North Carolina outlines the stories of the three families who moved into base housing at Camp Lejeune between August 2015 and October 2019. It seeks damages as well as nonmonetary reforms to leasing practices. First Sgt. Scott Johnson and his spouse, Lindsey Johnson; Staff Sgt. Garrett Burn and his spouse, Katie Burn; and Cpl. William Lewis and his spouse, Lakin Lewis, all dealt with mold in their homes and an uphill battle to have the issue addressed, as well as a host of other issues including roach infestations, malfunctioning air-conditioning systems and an ongoing struggle with water and leaks. Each of the families has young children.

The lawsuit was filed as class action and asks the court to certify the class as tenants of Camp Lejeune from Sept. 18, 2016, to the present.

"What I really want from this is justice for everybody to live in a safe, healthy home," said Lindsey Johnson, a mother of three whose husband has served 18 years in the Marines. "What started it was I watched my kids' health just deteriorate."

Her family was the first to move in to a newly built duplex at Camp Lejeune and had ongoing water leaks through the home's electrical system.

"That water enabled the house to grow mold that ultimately began to impact her family's health. Now out of the home for more than year, Johnson said her children still face health problems that she attributes to living in that house."

Officials at Camp Lejeune said in a statement that they are aware of the lawsuit.

"However, we are not a party to it, so it would be inappropriate to provide further comment at this time. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps is committed to ensuring our families have safe and adequate housing."

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Leader apologizes for North Korea killing man at sea

By KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has apologized for the killing of a South Korean official at sea earlier this week, calling the shooting death "unfortunate." South Korea's presidential office said Friday.

The rare apology was a major step toward defusing tensions a day after the South said that North Korean troops had fatally shot, then burned the body of a fisheries inspector who went missing from a patrol boat Monday in the Yellow Sea off the peninsula's western coast.

Earlier Friday, President Moon Jae-in vowed a firm response to threats against South Koreans' safety, and the military vowed to tighten its defensive posture.

The United Front Department of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party, which handles inter-Korean ties, called the inspector's death an "accident" in a message sent Friday, which was read in full by a senior presidential adviser.

Kim Jong Un "feels very sorry to have disappointed President Moon Jae-in and other South Korean compatriots because of an unexpected, unfortunate incident," at a time when they already are suffering because of the coronavirus pandemic, it said.

According to the account, North Korean troops were called to the scene after a fishing boat reported an "illegal intruder" in the area. The troops demanded that the man identify himself but didn't receive a satisfactory reply, so they fired two blanks.

The man appeared to prepare to flee so the troops fired 10 live rounds from about 160 feet away, the message said.

The North Koreans then approached and found a bloodied flotation device but no sign of the body. They burned the debris in

line with anti-coronavirus rules, according to the message read by the South's director of national security, Suh Hoon.

North Korea expressed regret about the South Korean military's fierce response to the shooting, which officials called a "brutal act."

"Our leadership says such a thing shouldn't have happened and has ordered troops to strengthen surveillance and other practices to prevent a recurrence of unfortunate incidents like these," it added.

It's extremely unusual for a North Korean leader to apologize, especially to the South as the two countries remain technically at war after their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Relations further deteriorated this year as the North began ignoring Moon's pleas for peace; it then blew up an inter-Korean liaison office on the border amid frustration over stalled nuclear talks with the United States.

It's unclear how the 47-year-old South Korean man ended up in the sea north of the de facto maritime boundary.

He disappeared Monday while working on an inspection boat near the border island of Yeonpyeong, off the western coast of the divided peninsula, according to the South Korean Defense Ministry.

Citing surveillance equipment and other intelligence, the ministry accused the North of shooting the man after finding him adrift on Tuesday, then pouring oil over his body and setting it on fire.

The two Koreas agreed in 2019 to cease hostilities near their land, air and sea borders as part of a comprehensive military agreement during a summit before diplomatic efforts faltered.

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Promotions: Milley seeks 'diversity to improve the system, to improve the military'

FROM FRONT PAGE

service members worried simply removing pictures would not go far enough.

Milley described the changes as a "sterilization" process, meant to ensure complete neutrality in deciding what troops advance in rank. It was one of several recommendations levied by a board of military officials examining racial and other diversity issues in the services.

That panel, the Defense Board

for Diversity and Inclusion led by Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett, has made at least 16 recommendations on changes that can be implemented quickly across the Defense Department, Esper said Thursday. He did not detail those recommendations.

"They are being fine-tuned and I'm confident that they are making good progress on that front," Esper said during the town hall. He added he is "frequently updated" on the panel's progress.

A second, outside panel of ex-

perts charged with finding long-term solutions to diversity issues in the military should begin meeting in December, Esper said.

Colon-Lopez, who serves on the internal diversity board, said the group was reviewing studies dating to the 1940s on racism and other diversity issues in the military. The board, he said, could propose other changes to ensure all troops get a fair shot at promotion no matter their background or race.

"At the end of the day, we need

to first define what those problems are, whether it's racism, discrimination, bias, or other forms that actually segregate a specific group of people based on their own likeness to other groups," Colon-Lopez said. "By December, we're going to have some changes implemented, [and] see if we need to rewrite policy to see if we need to better identify what is being done by the department."

Milley said he believed a promotions system based entirely on merit would ensure diverse

groups of service members are promoted.

"It's not just diversity for diversity's sake," he said. "It's diversity to improve the system, to improve the military, improve our problem-solving capabilities and improve our [combat] readiness in order to protect and defend the Constitution."

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MILITARY

Marines to study how it can train women in Calif.

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps will send a group of female drill instructors to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in the winter to study how the service can train female recruits at the base for the first time, Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger said Thursday.

"We're going to run a couple trials this winter time actually moving drill instructors from South Carolina to San Diego, like [temporary duty travel, temporary additional duty] and train recruits on the West Coast to see how this is going to work. But there's no provisions on the West Coast, there have never been, for females," he said during a virtual event with DefenseOne, a news organization.

The Marine Corps has two locations for training new recruits: Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., and Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif. Female recruits train at Parris Island but not at San Diego. The

reason that the Marines have kept training for women at only one location is that, for years, the number of female recruits was low, Berger said.

The Marine Corps also remains the only service that does not fully integrate recruits in all levels of training. While Parris Island has recently begun integrating male and female recruits at the company level, it is only done when there are smaller numbers of female recruits during the slower training months.

The fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act has a section mandating the Marine Corps to end gender-segregated training at Parris Island within five years and integrate the training at San Diego within eight years.

"We're not set up on the West Coast at all, for zero females. So we could go all the way to Nirvana on the East Coast and still have half the Marine Corps training without any female recruits there. That's not Nirvana in any way, in anybody's construct," Berger said.



REECEA L. FLOTO/U.S. Marine Corps

Sgt. Cristina Valenciatordes, a drill instructor with Papa Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, commands her platoon as they execute drill movements last November at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C.

The two biggest challenges standing in the way of fully integrating Marine Corps boot camps are infrastructure and staffing, the commandant said.

Parris Island has limited barracks space for women, and San Diego has none, so even getting women and men to train on both coasts immediately cannot happen, Berger said.

"It's definitely not as simple as build a couple buildings, and we'll be there," he said about infrastructure concerns at boot camps.

But getting the buildings is the first step, and the funding for those buildings needs to happen now, Berger said, but they still will not have all of them ready in place in the next five years.

In July, Berger highlighted the staffing difficulties the Marine Corps now faces with attempting to train more women at San Diego.

"Even if we had the facilities in San Diego, for us to dedicate [to developing] the female leadership at San Diego ... we would be ripping them out of platoons, rip-

ping them out of squadrons where they're at right now. We don't want to do that," he said.

Berger said they will need to work with Congress to find the best solution, but it would still take several years to get to that point.

But in five years, despite not having all the buildings and infrastructure in place, he said he would like to see as many companies as possible training platoons comprised of men and women.

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Test: Female soldiers worry new fitness exam will hinder military career

FROM FRONT PAGE

pro prowess over other qualities, such as effective and ethical leadership, or make it harder to retain troops with skills needed in an era of high-tech military competition.

Army officials say the new age- and gender-blind fitness test, the first of its kind in the U.S. military, was developed to reduce injuries and better prepare soldiers for the demands of fighting, expressing confidence that training will help female troops eventually meet the new standards.

Officials also say the test may be modified before results are incorporated into soldiers' evaluations, likely in 2022 when it could begin to affect promotions and future assignments.

"Combat is age and gender-neutral," said Maj. Gen. Lonnie Hibbard, commanding general of the Army's Center for Initial Military Training (CIMT), which designed the new test. "And so regardless of your gender or, more importantly, your [military profession], we have to ensure that everybody is prepared for combat."

The performance imbalance is rooted primarily in one of the test's six events, the leg tuck, which requires troops to hang from a pullup bar with their arms extended before lifting them-



KEN SCAR/U.S. Army Reserve

U.S. Army Reserve Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Onderko, of Lawton, Okla., right, grades Sgt. 1st Class Brent Powell, of Pochontas, Ark., as Powell does push-ups to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test at Woodward Academy in East Point, Ga., in 2017.

selves up using abdominal and arm muscles.

Soldiers must pass all six events, which also include carrying kettlebells and dragging sleds across a field, throwing a 10-pound ball backward over their heads, performing hand-release pushups and completing a two-mile run. The Army's previous test required troops to do only sit-ups, pushups and a two-mile run, and was adjusted for age and gender.

this year, said she worries the increased emphasis on muscular strength will eventually lead her and other females to leave the military earlier than planned.

"You're not going to have a lot of females make it to the top," she said.

While women now represent about 15% of Army personnel, they remain a small minority among the top enlisted and officer ranks, as they do in other services. A recent government watchdog report found that women are likely to leave the military earlier than men and said Pentagon leaders lack adequate plans to integrate women.

The ACFT, whose rollout has been complicated by the coronavirus pandemic, is one visible manifestation of the military's push to increase "lethality" across the force, which has become a hallmark at the Pentagon in recent years.

Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper, who served as Army secretary until 2019, has championed the test. A physical training or military "PT" enthusiast, Esper has often joined troops for their early-morning fitness sessions when visiting military facilities across the country.

"If you can't pass the Army Combat Fitness Test, then there's probably not a spot for you in the

Army," he said after plans for it was unveiled in 2018.

More importantly, officials say, nearly 20 years of insurgent warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan revealed a mismatch between the Army's previous way of training for and testing physical fitness and the realities of modern combat. That disconnect resulted in frequent injuries, which were costly for individual service members and the military.

Army officials say the new test, the product of seven years of work by a team of Army officials and scientists at the CIMT, is designed to simulate aspects of combat, such as dodging enemy fire or dragging a wounded comrade across a field. Those tasks are important not just for soldiers dispatched to the front lines but also for support troops who may also come under attack.

The vast majority of soldiers have now taken the test at least once.

In response to women's high failure rate to date, the Army is temporarily allowing troops who cannot complete a leg tuck to do a two-minute plank instead.

"What we're really trying to figure out is how do you incentivize excellence in improving physical fitness without adversely impacting any demographic negatively within the Army," Hibbard said.

NATION

Taylor family, lawyers criticize state prosecutor

BY PIPER HUDSPETH
BLACKBURN, BRUCE
SCHREINER AND ANGIE WANG
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Breonna Taylor's family and their lawyers sharply criticized Kentucky's attorney general for the failure to bring charges against police officers in her death, calling Friday for him to release the transcripts of the grand jury proceeding while vowing to continue protests until the officers are charged.

Tamika Palmer, Taylor's mother, said in a statement read by a relative to a gathering in Louisville that she did not expect justice from state Attorney General Daniel Cameron.

Ben Crump, a lawyer for the family, urged the prosecutor to make the transcripts public, so people can see if anyone was present at the grand jury proceedings to give a voice to Taylor. Gov. Andy Beshear, a Democrat, has also called for Cameron to release what evidence he can.

Cameron's spokeswoman, Elizabeth Kuhn, said the prosecutor understood that Taylor's family "is in an incredible amount of pain and anguish" and that the grand jury decision was not the one they wanted. But, the statement added, "prosecutors and grand jury members are bound by the facts and by the law."

Taylor, a Black woman who was an emergency medical worker, was shot multiple times by white officers after Taylor's boyfriend fired at them, authorities said. He said he fired in self-defense,



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

Breonna Taylor family attorney Ben Crump, center, speaks at a news conference, Friday in Louisville, Ky.

wounding one officer. Police were conducting a drug investigation and entered on a warrant connected to a suspect who did not live there, and no drugs were found inside.

Cameron has said the investigation showed officers acted in self-defense. The grand jury charged one officer, who has already been fired, with firing into a neighboring apartment.

At almost the same time that Taylor's family was decrying the handling of her case, a man accused of shooting at police during protests Wednesday was

being arraigned. Two officers were wounded and expected to recover.

A not guilty plea was entered Friday for Larynzo D. Johnson, 26. Bond was set at \$1 million. Zac Meihaus, the attorney representing Johnson at the arraignment, said it is difficult to "pinpoint" if Johnson fired the shots in question. A prosecutor replied that a gun was recovered from Johnson, and there are video and witness accounts of the shootings.

The big question for Louisville, which has been torn apart by Taylor's death, and the larger

issue of racism in America, was how to move forward.

The FBI is still investigating whether Taylor's civil rights were violated, and some have put their hope in that probe, but the burden of proof for such cases is very high.

Many have taken to the streets around the country. On Thursday, some of them raised their fists and called out "Black lives matter!" Others tended to the letters, flowers and signs grouped together in a square in downtown Louisville. All of them said her name, which has become a rallying cry.

"We've got to take it lying down that the law won't protect us, that they can get away with killing us," said Lavel White, a regular protester in downtown Louisville who is Black. "If we can't get justice for Breonna Taylor, can we get justice for anybody?"

Some of the peaceful protests in Louisville have given way to destruction and violence. The governor has called up the National Guard for "limited missions."

But state Rep. Attica Scott — who said she was arrested Thursday night as she headed toward a church that protesters were congregating in — criticized law enforcement's response to the demonstration.

"It's clear that this alphabet soup of law enforcement here in Louisville, both local, state and federal, are preparing for war against the people they're supposed to protect," said Scott, who called the charges she was arrested on "ridiculous."

She was held overnight and released Friday.

Demonstrators demanding justice for Taylor have also gathered in places like Los Angeles where a vehicle ran through a crowd of protesters, injuring one person. In Portland, Ore. — a city that has seen many protests since the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis — a fire was set at a police union building.

While there was despair after the decision in Taylor's case, others saw reasons to hope.

Reginine Jones said she'll keep pressing for increased police accountability and for a statewide ban on "no knock" warrants — the kind issued in the Taylor case, though the state attorney general said the investigation showed police announced themselves before busting into her apartment.

"I believe that we are going to get past this," Jones said as she returned Thursday to the park in downtown Louisville that has been at the center of the protests. "We can still get some justice."

Since Taylor's killing, Louisville has taken some steps to address protesters' concerns. In addition to the officer who was fired and later charged, three others were put on desk duty. Officials have banned no-knock warrants and arrested a Black woman as the permanent police chief — a first for the city.

Louisville also agreed to more police reforms as it settled a lawsuit that included \$12 million for Taylor's family. But many have expressed frustration that more has not been done.

Teen charged in Kenosha shootings to fight extradition to Wisconsin

BY SCOTT BAUER
AND TERESA CRAWFORD
Associated Press

WAUKEGAN, Ill. — A 17-year-old in Illinois accused of killing two protesters days after Jacob Blake was shot by police in Kenosha, Wis., on Friday fought his return to Wisconsin to face homicide charges that could put him in prison for life.

Kyle Rittenhouse was arrested at his home in Antioch, Ill., a day after prosecutors say he shot and killed two protesters and wounded a third on the streets of Kenosha on Aug. 25. His attorneys have said Rittenhouse acted in self-defense and have portrayed him as a courageous patriot who was exercising his right to bear arms during unrest over the police shooting of Blake, who is Black.

Rittenhouse attorney John Pierce said during a hearing Friday that he intends to fight extradition. Pierce asked for a month to prepare arguments challenging extradition that he said involve "issues of some complexity, frankly that have not arisen in the country for some time."



NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT/AP

In this screen grab from livestream video, Kyle Rittenhouse appears via Zoom during a Friday hearing at the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Court in Waukegan, Ill.

"We intend to challenge extradition by writ of habeas corpus," Pierce said.

He didn't provide further details at the hearing about the basis for the challenge. Judge Paul Novak granted two weeks to prepare those arguments and scheduled another hearing for Oct. 9. The delay in returning Rittenhouse to Wisconsin is the second in the case.

Rittenhouse attended the hearing via Zoom and did not speak, other than to say, "Good morning your honor" to the judge.

Rittenhouse, who is white, is charged with first-degree intentional homicide in the killing of two white protesters and attempted intentional homicide in the wounding of a third. He also faces a misdemeanor charge of underage firearm possession for wielding a semi-automatic rifle.

If convicted of first-degree homicide, Rittenhouse faces a mandatory life in prison sentence.

To some, Rittenhouse is a domestic terrorist whose very presence with a rifle incited the protesters in Kenosha. To others — who have become frustrated with demonstrations and unrest across the country — he's seen as a hero who took up arms to protect businesses, including some that were damaged during unrest the previous two nights.

Rittenhouse's legal team includes Los Angeles-based Pierce and Lin Wood, a defamation lawyer who represented falsely accused security guard Richard Jewell in the 1996 Olympic Park bombing case in Atlanta and is a lawyer for Sean Hannity, the Fox News host with close ties to President Donald Trump.

14 arrested after protesters set fire at police union building in Portland, Ore.

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Protesters in Portland late Thursday set fire to plywood attached to the front door of a police union building in Oregon's largest city and clashed with officers, who made 14 arrests, police said in a statement.

Images posted online showed flames erupting outside the doors of the Portland Police Association office. Some protesters managed later to get on the roof of the building, police said in a statement Friday.

The protesters who were detained were arrested on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to interfering with officers and trespassing.

The violence came a day after people hurled several firebombs at officers during a demonstration over a Kentucky grand jury's decision to not indict officers in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor, police said.

The city has had nearly four months of near nightly protests over racial injustice and police

brutality.

Deputy Police Chief Chris Davis said Wednesday night's demonstrations were the most violent that Portland has experienced since the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died in Minnesota after a white officer held a knee to his neck.

Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt — who has been criticized for dismissing cases against hundreds of protesters — condemned the violence and called for calm.

Thirteen people were arrested during Wednesday night's demonstration. U.S. agents with the Federal Protective Service, who were guarding a federal courthouse nearby, offered assistance during the demonstration and Portland police accepted because it was an "emergency need in the moment," Davis told reporters Thursday.

The right-wing group Proud Boys was expected to hold a rally in Portland Saturday to support President Donald Trump and the police.

NATION

Ginsburg lies in US Capitol for limited viewing

By LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is lying in state at the U.S. Capitol, the first woman in American history to do so, in commemoration of her extraordinary life.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said it is with “profound sorrow” that she welcomed the liberal icon and opened the private service.

Mourners gathered under coronavirus restrictions for the service for Ginsburg, who died last week at age 87, as her casket made the short procession from the court’s iconic steps where it had been on public view Friday to the East Front of the Capitol. A military honor guard carried it inside the Capitol’s stately Statuary Hall.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, sat quietly with other elected officials, friends and family. His vice presidential running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris was also attending.

Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer welcomed Ginsburg’s casket with the Capitol in turmoil. President Donald is prepared to announce a conservative nominee to replace the justice on Saturday, weeks before the election.

Speaking ahead of the event, Pelosi told CBS that Americans

need to know what’s at stake for the “rush” to confirm Ginsburg’s replacement.

The politics of the moment, in a tense election year, rippled throughout the celebrations this week of Ginsburg’s life and career. But Friday’s ceremony began as a celebration and honoring of her life and work, with musical selections from one of Ginsburg’s favorite opera singers, mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves.

Several members of Congress, including Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, both former presidential contenders, were among those attending. Members of the House and Senate who were not invited to the ceremony because of space limitations imposed by the coronavirus pandemic will be able to pay their respects before a motorcade carrying Ginsburg’s casket departs the Capitol early afternoon.

The honor of lying in state has been accorded fewer than three dozen times, mostly to presidents, vice presidents, and members of Congress. Rep. John Lewis, the civil rights icon, was the most recent person to lie in state following his death in July. Henry Clay, the Kentucky lawmaker who served as Speaker of the House and also was a senator, was the first in 1852. Rosa Parks — a private citizen, not a government official — is the only woman who has lain in honor at the Capitol.



SHAWN THEW, POOL/AP

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg lies in state in Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Friday.



OLIVIER DOULIERY, POOL/AP

U.S. congresswomen pay their respects at the flag-draped casket of Ginsburg lies in state at the U.S. Capitol.

Ginsburg has lain in repose for two days at the Supreme Court, where thousands of people paid their respects, including President Donald Trump and first lady

Melania Trump on Thursday. Spectators boomed and chanted “vote him out” as the president, who wore a mask, stood silently near Ginsburg’s casket.

Judge: 2020 census must stay for one more month

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — A federal judge has stopped the 2020 census from finishing at the end of September and ordered the once-a-decade head count of every U.S. resident to continue for another month through the end of October, saying a shortened schedule likely would produce inaccurate results.

U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh in California made her ruling late Thursday, two days after hearing arguments from attorneys for the Census Bureau, and attorneys for civil rights groups and local governments that had sued the Census Bureau in an effort to halt the 2020 census from stopping at the end of the month. Attorneys for the civil rights groups and local governments said the shortened schedule would undercount residents in minority and hard-to-count communities.

Koh said inaccuracies produced from a shortened schedule would affect the distribution of federal funding and political representation. The census is used to determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is distributed each year and how many congressional seats each state gets.

Government attorneys had argued that the census must finish by the end of September to meet a Dec. 31 deadline for turning over numbers used for deciding how many congressional seats each state gets.

Koh’s preliminary injunction suspends that end-of-the-year deadline, too.

Testimony about Roger Stone disputed by supervisors

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Three career supervisors in the D.C. U.S. attorney’s office have disputed the sworn congressional testimony given by a former prosecutor on Robert Mueller’s team, telling Justice Department officials they believe he mischaracterized communications with them about undue political pressure in the criminal case against President Donald Trump’s longtime friend Roger Stone, according to people familiar with the matter.

The prosecutor, Aaron Zelinsky, told the House Judiciary Committee in June that he felt politics influenced the prison sentence that was recommended for Stone, who was convicted of lying to lawmakers investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election. After Zelinsky and other career prosecutors recommended that Stone face seven to nine years in prison, and Trump angrily tweeted about the case, Attorney General William Barr intervened and had the Justice Department propose a lighter punishment.

Barr’s move drew widespread criticism

and prompted all four career prosecutors to quit the case. Zelinsky’s allegation that the action was motivated by politics amplified the controversy, though some of his supervisors soon privately reported that they felt he had not accurately described what they conveyed, said the people familiar with the matter, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal Justice Department deliberations.

The Justice Department inspector general’s office is now reviewing the matter and has contacted at least one of the prosecutors assigned to the case.

Robert Litt, a lawyer for Zelinsky, said in an email, “He stands by his testimony and the Mueller report.”

Though the extent of the dispute is unknown, the supervisors’ account is notable because Zelinsky conceded to lawmakers that he did not discuss the Stone case directly with Barr, Deputy Attorney General Jeff Rosen or then-acting U.S. Attorney Tim Shea. Rather, he said, it was his supervisors who explained why the department was “treating Roger Stone differently from everyone else.”

“And what I heard repeatedly was that this leniency was happening because of Stone’s relationship to the president; that the acting U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia was receiving heavy pressure from the highest levels of the Department of Justice, and that his instructions to us were based on political considerations,” Zelinsky testified. “And I was told that the acting U.S. attorney was giving Stone a break because he was afraid of the president.”

Pressed by Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, a close ally of the president, to identify which supervisors he had spoken with, Zelinsky specifically mentioned fraud chief J.P. Cooney, saying he was the person who said that Shea was “afraid of the president” and that the motivation for altering the career prosecutors’ recommendation was political.

Zelinsky testified that the U.S. attorney’s first assistant, who he later identified as Alessio Evangelista, and criminal chief, whom he did not identify, were also “involved in these discussions to my knowledge,” and it was his “understanding” that

one or more of them had talked to Barr, Rosen or Shea. Zelinsky later clarified, though, that he “did not have any conversations with Mr. Evangelista following the filing of our memo” recommending Stone’s prison sentence.

Cooney referred questions to the D.C. U.S. attorney’s press office, which declined to comment. Evangelista did not return messages.

Kerri Kupec, a Justice Department spokeswoman, confirmed earlier this month that the Justice Department’s inspector general had launched a review of how officials handled Stone’s case, though it was unclear what, precisely, prompted that inquiry and whether its focus was political pressure surrounding sentencing recommendation, Zelinsky’s testimony or other matters.

“We welcome the review,” Kupec said.

A spokeswoman for the inspector general declined to comment.

Shea, who is now the acting administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, declined to comment through a spokeswoman.

NATION



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden speaks during a Biden for President Black economic summit at Camp North End in Charlotte, N.C.

Biden's relaxed style worries Dems

Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. — The final stretch of a presidential campaign is typically a nonstop mix of travel, caffeine and adrenaline. But as the worst pandemic in a century bears down on the United States, Joe Biden is taking a lower key approach.

Since his Aug. 11 selection of California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, Biden has had 22 days where he either didn't make public appearances, held only virtual fundraisers or ventured from his Delaware home solely for church, according to an Associated Press analysis of his schedules. He made 12 visits outside of Delaware during that period, including a trip to Washington scheduled for Friday to pay respects to the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

During the same time, President Donald Trump had 24 trips that took him to 17 different states, not counting a personal

visit to New York to see his ailing brother in the hospital or weekend golf outings.

Biden's aides insist his approach is intentional, showcasing his respect for public health guidelines aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus and presenting a responsible contrast with Trump, who has resumed large-scale campaign rallies — sometimes over the objections of local officials. Still, some Democrats say it's critical that Biden infuse his campaign with more energy.

"We are campaigning safely and effectively, and our message is reaching voters in battleground states and generating the enthusiasm and energy we need to beat Donald Trump," said Biden spokesman TJ Ducklo.

The race between Biden and Trump has been generally consistent for months. Biden has maintained a comfortable lead in many national polls and has an advantage, though narrower, in

many of the battleground states that will decide the election.

But polls that showed competitive races or even Democratic advantages in traditionally Republican states proved to be false indicators for Democrats in 2016.

Four years later, Biden faces persistent questions about whether his campaign is organizing and connecting with voters. When he visited Charlotte, N.C., on Wednesday for a Black economic summit, Collette Alston, chairwoman of the local African American Caucus, said she only found out when she saw it on TV.

Just 16 people attended the event and Alston warned that Biden wasn't reaching locals she thinks he needs to — "the people that are like, I don't care, I really don't want to vote."

"I do believe that he can win North Carolina," Alston said. "Can he win it based on what he's doing right now? No. That's not the way to win it."

Facebook shuts down network in election scandal

By CRAIG TIMBERG

The Washington Post

Facebook shut down two Russian disinformation networks operated by the nation's intelligence services and a third by people affiliated with a notorious troll farm that interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the company announced Thursday.

The networks focused their efforts in numerous nations in Europe and Asia, with relatively little reach among U.S. audiences, Facebook concluded. But the involvement of people and entities that previously had targeted American politics underscored the ongoing threat posed by Russia's disinformation machinery, which U.S. intelligence officials have said is also attempting to interfere in November's presidential vote.

"Today's disclosures are further evidence that Russia continues aggressive interference operations and broader influence operations aimed at divisions within countries and among allies," said Graham Brookie, director of the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, which tracks disinformation and studied two of the three networks removed by Facebook.

Graphika, another outside research group that studied one of the Russian networks, said one of the campaigns aimed at Americans focused on courting Black voters and criticizing Democratic nominee Joe Biden — in efforts that included Facebook and other

online services including Twitter, Medium, Tumblr and WordPress. One blog called "Black and intelligent" was created by Russian operatives in 2018, and its supporting account on Twitter displayed an image and quote from the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. The blog featured articles copied from numerous news sources, including The Washington Post, with a focus on racial issues.

"Black and intelligent" offered criticisms of Biden and promoted his onetime rival for the Democratic nomination, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. The overall reach of the effort was small, with followers in the hundreds, but the operatives used a feature on WordPress to collect 327 emails of those who viewed the blog, Graphika reported.

"Once again, we see fake accounts designed to appeal to Black communities in the U.S.," said Camille Francois, chief innovation officer for Graphika. "In the two years where these accounts were active, they largely failed to build an audience."

The three Russian networks involved nearly 350 accounts, pages and groups on Facebook and its photo-sharing subsidiary Instagram. Overall the topics were wide-ranging and in line with Russian strategic themes, including the Syrian civil war, military conflict in Ukraine, Turkish politics, the coronavirus pandemic and the potential for civil unrest during the U.S. presidential election.

Trump promotes health care 'vision' with little time remaining

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — More than three-and-a-half years into his presidency and 40 days from an election, President Donald Trump on Thursday launched what aides termed a "vision" for health care heavy on unfulfilled aspirations.

"This is affirmed, signed, and done, so we can put that to rest," Trump said. He signed an executive order on a range of issues, including protecting people with preexisting medical conditions from insurance discrimination.

But that right is already guaranteed in the Obama-era health law his administration is asking the Supreme Court to overturn.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi dismissively said Trump's "bogus executive order on pre-existing conditions isn't worth the paper it's signed on." Democrats are betting heavily that they have the

edge on health care this election season.

Trump spoke at an airport hangar in swing-state North Carolina to a crowd that included white-coated, mask-wearing health care workers. He stood on a podium in front of a blue background emblazoned with "America First Healthcare Plan." His latest health care pitch won accolades from administration officials and political supporters but failed to impress others.

"Executive orders issued close to elections are not the same thing as actual policies," said Katherine Hempstead, a senior policy adviser with the nonpartisan Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which works on a range of health care issues, from coverage to quality.

Trump returned to health care amid disapproval of his administration's handling of the coro-

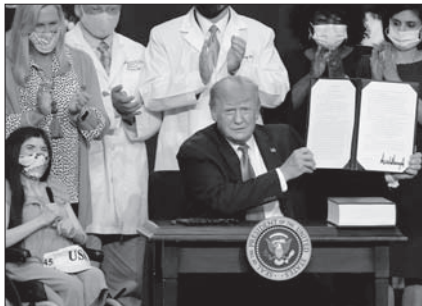
navirus pandemic and growing uncertainty about the future of the Obama-era law.

In a rambling speech, he promised quality health care at affordable prices, lower prescription drug costs, more consumer choice and greater transparency. His executive order would also try to end surprise medical bills.

"If we win we will have a better and less expensive plan that will always protect individuals with preexisting conditions," Trump declared.

But while his administration has made some progress on its health care goals, the sweeping changes Trump promised as a candidate in 2016 have eluded him.

The clock has all but run out in Congress for major legislation on lowering drug costs or ending surprise bills, much less replacing the Affordable Care Act, or "Obamacare."



CHRIS CARLSON/AP

President Donald Trump holds up an executive order after delivering remarks Thursday on health care at Charlotte Douglas International Airport in Charlotte, N.C.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Drugmaker Novavax begins late-stage vaccine trial in UK

Associated Press

LONDON — U.S.-based Novavax has begun a late stage trial of its potential COVID-19 vaccine in the United Kingdom because the high level of the coronavirus circulating in the country is likely to produce quick results, the pharmaceutical company said.

Novavax plans to test the effectiveness of its vaccine in a trial involving 10,000 people between the ages of 18 and 84, according to a statement issued late Thursday. At least 25% of the subjects will be over the age of 65, and 400 participants will also receive a licensed flu vaccine.

The trial is being conducted in partnership with the U.K. government's Vaccine Taskforce, which was created in April to help speed the development of a COVID-19 vaccine.

"With a high level of SARS-CoV-2 transmission observed and expected to continue in the U.K., we are optimistic that this pivotal phase 3 clinical trial will enroll quickly and provide a near-term view of (the vaccine's) efficacy," Dr. Gregory M. Glenn, head of research and development for Novavax, said in the statement.

The announcement comes as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the U.K. The government reported 6,634 new positive test results on Thursday — the U.K.'s highest daily number since the pandemic began. Britain has the deadliest outbreak in Europe, with nearly 42,000 confirmed COVID-19 deaths.

Rio's Carnival is disrupted for first time in a century

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — A cloud of uncertainty that has hung over Rio de Janeiro throughout the coronavirus pandemic has been lifted, but gloom remains — the annual Carnival parade of flamboyant samba schools won't be held in February.

And while the decision is being characterized as a postponement of the event, no new date has been set.

Rio's League of Samba Schools, LIESA, announced Thursday night that the spread of the coronavirus has made it impossible to safely hold the traditional parades that are a cultural mainstay and, for many, a source of livelihood.

"Carnival is a party upon which many humble workers depend. The samba schools are community institutions, and the parades are just one detail of all that," Luiz Antonio Simas, a historian who specializes in Rio's Carnival, said in an interview.

"An entire cultural and productive chain was disrupted by COVID."

Drugmakers are rushing to develop COVID-19 vaccines with the backing of governments desperate to find a way of easing restrictions that have hammered the world economy.

The U.K. has already agreed to buy 60 million doses of the Novavax vaccine to ensure it can be distributed as quickly as possible if it is approved by regulators.

The government said Friday that participants in the Novavax trial will be drawn from the 250,000 people who have volunteered to take part in COVID-19 vaccine testing through the National Health Service's Vaccine Registry.

"Finding a safe and effective vaccine that works for the majority of the U.K. population is the best way to tackle this devastating disease," said Kate Bingham, chair of the government's Vaccines Taskforce. "Whilst social distancing, testing and other measures can help reduce the impact of coronavirus, the only long-term solution to beating it will be finding a vaccine."

Novavax also pledged to publish details of its vaccine testing protocol "to enhance information-sharing during the worldwide pandemic."

Drugmakers are under pressure to release more information about the progress of their vaccine trials — information they normally wouldn't release until the trials are complete — to increase public confidence in their work.



AP photos

A woman passes a fence outside Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery adorned with tributes to victims of COVID-19 in New York in May.

Forever changed

A look at the impact of coronavirus as deaths near 1 million

The Associated Press

As it marched from East to West this year, the coronavirus pandemic sank economies and transformed social interactions. It shut schools and businesses, stopped the sports and entertainment industries dead in their tracks, and even brought low the Olympic Games.

And it killed. Nearly 1 million deaths have been recorded worldwide to date, according to data tracked by Johns Hopkins University.

The effects were global — but also personal. The virus changed how people socialized and shopped, worked and dressed. It changed how they cared for their loved ones and how they mourned them.

It even changed the language they used. The word "hero" was employed with more frequency — and the definition expanded to include delivery and sanitation workers, cleaners and waiters. And, of course, health care workers, who in China and Italy, Iran and South Africa, the United States and Brazil toiled in hazmat suits for hours on end to treat the sick.

The virus changed how people interacted and how they thought about interaction. People isolated to stay healthy — and then worried about what isolation was doing to their health.

Many people were unable to say goodbye to their loved ones because of restrictions at hospitals; others held them in their final moments, draped head-to-toe in protective gear. Funerals were also sterile affairs, if they happened at all.

And still the pandemic is far from over. The toll is climbing. By around 5,000 a day, a death every 17 seconds somewhere in the world.



Above: Agustina Casamero, 81, and Pascual Perez, 84, hug and kiss through a plastic film screen in Barcelona, Spain, in June. Left: Martina Pappone, 25, a nurse at the Humanitas Gavazzeni Hospital in Bergamo, Italy, poses for a portrait at the end of her shift in March.



The family of Larry Hammond wave as a line of cars with friends and family, who could not attend his funeral because of limits on gatherings, pass by their home in New Orleans in April.

VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Nevada positivity rate rises after a monthlong decline

Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — Likely spurred by increased exposures to the coronavirus at social gatherings during the Labor Day weekend, Nevada's statewide daily positivity rate for COVID-19 is on an upward trend after a steady decline over the past month, health officials say.

A recent surge in Washoe County and smaller gains in new cases are being reported elsewhere in the tourism-dependent state with the highest unemployment rate in the nation at 13.2%.

"We are seeing the beginnings of some trends that could be tied to the Labor Day or to other public exposures that have occurred in the last two weeks right now," said Caleb Cage, Nevada's COVID-19 response director. "I think you can see that in our numbers of new cases every day that've come up this week. It's small increases, but there have been noticeable increases to date," he said Wednesday.

Nevada's seven-day moving average for its daily positivity rate climbed to 8.6% on Wednesday. In Clark County it was 11% and in Washoe County 6.9%.

The goal set by the World Health Organization is 5%.

The statewide rate had dipped to 6.6% on Sept. 9 after a fairly steady decline dating to Aug. 24 when it was 11.5%. It remained below 7% through Sept. 15 before rising to 7.3% on Sept. 21.

New Mexico

SANTA FE — Voters across New Mexico have submitted nearly 250,000 absentee ballot requests with especially strong demand among Democrats for alternatives to in-person voting amid the pandemic, according to statistics released Thursday by state voting regulators. In 2016, voters cast 8,000 absentee ballots.

Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver said the popularity of absentee voting may translate into a lengthier process for tallying ballots that could extend beyond Election Day on Nov. 3.

She said county clerks have been allotted more time to authenticate absentee ballots as they arrive ahead of Election Day, but the counting process could potentially last for several days if voters wait until late in the cycle to mail or hand deliver ballots. Absentee ballots must be received by 7 p.m. on Nov. 3 to be counted.

"We are hoping that this additional time is going to give our clerks the leg up that they need to be able to get through the vast majority of those absentee ballots on Election Day," Toulouse Oliver said during a news conference with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. "If more than half of these ballots come back on Election Day, then we probably are going to be into a multiday, after-the-fact process of getting those initial counts tallied."

Texas

HOUSTON — Results from a program that's testing Houston's wastewater to monitor the local spread of the coronavirus have shown that it could be a faster way of detecting outbreaks in the nation's fourth-largest city, officials said Thursday.

Since May, the city and scientists from Rice University and Baylor College of Medicine have tested wastewater from the city's 39 treatment plants. Studies indicate genetic material from the virus can be recovered from the stools of about half of patients with the COVID-19 virus. Wastewater analysis looks for that genetic material.

"The goal is to help develop an early warning system, allowing the health department to identify the city's COVID-19 hot spots sooner and put measures in place to slow the spread of this disease," said Mayor Sylvester Turner.

During the summer, Houston had a surge in coronavirus cases as the area's intensive care units were filled with patients. Since then, hospitalizations have decreased and the city's positivity rate for the virus has gone from a high of nearly 26% in July to 6.1% as of last week.

Florida

TALLAHASSEE — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Thursday he would seek a "bill of rights" for college students following crackdowns on parties and other social gatherings that some blame for a surge in COVID-19 cases on campuses around the country.

"I understand that universities are trying to do the right thing," DeSantis said during a news briefing at the Capitol, "but I personally think it's dramatically draconian that a student could get potentially expelled for going to a party. That's what college kids do."

The Republican governor also said he would move to block local governments from closing restaurants again, saying there's little evidence that such closures have slowed the spread of the coronavirus.

On Thursday, Florida reported 2,541 more COVID-19 cases, bringing the statewide total to more than 693,000. The state also reported 177 more deaths, bringing the total among Florida residents to at least 13,795.

Georgia

FORSYTH — In-person classes have been called off for two weeks at a Georgia middle school after more than 90 students and staff were exposed to the coronavirus.

The Monroee County school system said Thursday in a news release that all students at Monroee County Middle School in Forsyth would shift to online instruction starting Monday. Learning will remain entirely online through Oct. 9, when the district starts



ROBERT COHEN, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH/AP

Members of the St. Louis Symphony Quintet perform for medical workers on the campus of the Washington University School of Medicine and Barnes-Jewish Hospital on Thursday in St. Louis. The lunch hour performance is part of the orchestra's "On the Go" series of pop-up chamber music events.

its fall break. In-person classes would resume Oct. 19.

Cases statewide continue to fall, with the seven-day average of newly confirmed cases at their lowest point since late June, as well as the number of people hospitalized with the respiratory illness.

Georgia has reported more than 311,000 cases overall. Newly reported deaths remain high, with confirmed deaths reaching a total of 6,822 Thursday.

Iowa

Dozens of students in Iowa schools were quarantined after both staff and students tested positive for the coronavirus, while a high school switched to online classes after some students were absent as cases surged Thursday by more than 1,300 across the state in the last 24 hours.

An Iowa elementary school quarantined 130 elementary students after a staff member tested positive for coronavirus, while a high school switched to online classes after some students were absent as coronavirus cases surged Thursday by more than 1,300 across the state in the last 24 hours.

Officials at the Hartwick-Ladora-Victor Community School District quarantined 130 kindergarten through sixth grade students beginning Wednesday after a staff member tested positive for the virus a day earlier, Superintendent Brad Hohnes said.

The district has no mask requirement, though it has posted a notice on its website that it began requiring masks at indoor athletic events on Sept. 20. The district is based in Victor, nearly 76 miles east of Des Moines.

North Scott High School, which is quarantining more than 200 high school students due to positive tests, went to all online instruction last Friday, according to a Sept. 17 letter the school sent to the Iowa Department of Education.

The district, based in Eldridge in eastern Iowa, said its absentee rate has spiked since school start-

ed Sept. 1 and was 23% at the high school as of Sept. 18.

Connecticut

Capacity at Connecticut restaurants, hair salons, libraries, and certain outdoor and indoor event and performing arts venues will increase beginning Oct. 8, while bars and nightclubs will remain closed to prevent possible spread of the coronavirus, Gov. Ned Lamont announced Thursday.

Given Connecticut's low COVID-19 infection rate, which has hovered around 1% for weeks, the Democrat said he believes the state is also ready to increase the size of allowable indoor and outdoor gatherings, so long as people continue to be cautious and take steps such as wearing face masks, social distancing and washing their hands.

"I think this is something we ought to be ready to do," said Lamont during his coronavirus briefing with reporters, noting the state did not see any spikes in cases after it began allowing restaurants and other venues to gradually reopen.

Under the plan, indoor capacity at restaurants will increase from 50% to 75%, with eateries required to keep diners 6 feet apart or partitioned by plexiglass or other material. Capacity at libraries and businesses that provide personal services, such as barbers, will also increase from 50% to 75%.

Illinois

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Public Health on Thursday reported 2,257 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 30 confirmed deaths.

The numbers reveal that as of late Wednesday, 1,713 people in Illinois were reported to be hospitalized with COVID-19. Of those, 400 patients were being treated in intensive care units, with 155 patients on ventilators.

More than 8,500 people in Illinois have died of COVID-19 since the pandemic's outbreak earlier this year.

Thursday's confirmed cases

were the result of 62,071 tests over the past 24 hours, putting the state's seven-day positivity rate at 3.5%.

Oregon

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority reported 382 new confirmed COVID-19 cases Thursday, the state's highest daily case count since mid-July.

Officials also said 77 employees at a seafood processing plant on the Oregon Coast tested positive for coronavirus. The outbreak was tied to Labor Day social activities.

Oregon's confirmed COVID-19 case count, since the start of the pandemic, is now 31,865. The death toll is 539.

Nearly 25% of the cases reported Thursday were in Multnomah County, Oregon's most populous county and home to Portland.

Ohio

COLUMBUS — People seeing images of a woman arrested at a middle school football game after refusing requests to put on a mask should not rush to judgment, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said Thursday as he called the incident "very unfortunate, very unpleasant."

A stun gun was used on the woman after she wouldn't leave the football stadium in Logan in southeastern Ohio on Wednesday, the Logan Police Department said in a news release. The woman, who told police she had asthma and wouldn't be wearing the mask, was arrested on a criminal trespassing charge and not for refusing to wear a mask, the agency said.

It was unclear if the woman was a parent. Only parents and other close relatives are permitted at fall sporting events under Ohio health orders.

"Once she refused to leave the premises, she was advised she was under arrest for criminal trespassing, she resisted the arrest, which led to the use of force," the agency said. "This is an unfortunate incident for everyone involved. The incident remains under investigation."

WORLD

Police: 2 held in Paris attack

Associated Press

PARIS — French terrorism authorities are investigating a double-stabbing outside the former Paris offices of a satirical newspaper where a dozen people were killed in 2015, and two suspects have been arrested in Friday's violence, authorities said.

France's counterterrorism prosecutor said authorities suspect a terrorist motive because of the place and timing of the stabbings: in front of the building where Charlie Hebdo was based until the Islamic extremist attack on its cartoonists and at a time when suspects in the 2015 attack are on trial across town.

Prosecutor Jean-François Ricard said that the chief suspect in Friday's stabbings was arrested, along with another person. Ricard said the assailant did not know the people who were stabbed, two workers in a documentary production company who had stepped outside for a



THIBRAULY CAMUS/AP

French police officers patrol the area after a knife attack in Paris Friday near the former offices of satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo.

smoke break.

The suspects' identities have not been released, and it is unclear exactly what prompted the attack. An investigation was opened into "attempted murder in relation with a terrorist enterprise," according to an official at the terrorism prosecutor's office.

French Prime Minister Jean Castex said the lives of the two wounded workers are not in danger. He offered the government's solidarity with their families and colleagues.

Associated Press reporters at the scene saw police flood the neighborhood in eastern Paris near the Richard Lenoir subway station, which remained cordoned off hours later. Children were sequestered in nine schools while police scoured the area, but were later released, according to the Paris school district.

The two people confirmed injured worked for documentary film company Premières Lignes, according to founder Paul Moreira.

He told BFM television that the attacker fled into the subway, and the company's staff members were evacuated.

Moreira said a man in the street "attacked two people who were in front of the building, didn't enter the building, and who attacked them with an axe and who left." He said the company had not received any threats.

Witness Kader Alfa told The AP at the scene: "I saw a guy that was in his 30s or 40s with an axe in his hand who was walking behind a victim covered in blood."

A wrenching, two-month trial in the Charlie Hebdo attacks is currently unfolding at the main Paris courthouse.

'Hotel Rwanda' hero admits backing rebels, not violence

By IGNATIUS SSUUNA
Associated Press

KIGALI, Rwanda — The man portrayed as a hero in the movie "Hotel Rwanda" has admitted in court that he backed a rebel group, but denied that he supported any violence or killings.

Paul Rusesabagina, in a pink prison uniform for his bail hearing on Friday, told the court in Kigali, the capital, that he helped to form the National Liberation Front in order to assist Rwandan refugees, but said he never supported violence.

The judge has postponed ruling on his application for bail until Oct. 2.

Rusesabagina, a Belgian citizen and U.S. permanent resident who has been a prominent critic of President Paul Kagame, is charged with 13 offenses that also include financing terrorism, complicity in murder, recruiting child soldiers, and forming a rebel group. If convicted, he faces a maximum of 25 years in prison. It's not clear when his trial will begin.

Rusesabagina, 66, has lived outside Rwanda since 1996 but on Aug. 31, he suddenly appeared in the East African country in handcuffs.

Earlier this month, he described how he disappeared while visiting Dubai and then turned up days later in Rwanda, a country his family says he'd never return to voluntarily. Speaking to The New York Times with Rwandan authorities present, he said he thought the private plane he

boarded in Dubai was going to Bujuumbura, Burundi, where he had planned to speak to churches at a pastor's invitation.

Instead, Rusesabagina stepped out of the plane and was surrounded by Rwandan soldiers, the report said. He said he was then tied up, couldn't see anything and didn't know where he was.

Human Rights Watch has asserted that Rusesabagina was "forcibly disappeared," saying that the lack of lawful international extradition proceedings suggests that Rwandan authorities don't believe their evidence would stand up to independent scrutiny.

Rusesabagina had asked to be released on bail, citing poor health that has caused him to be taken to a hospital three times since his arrest.

He looked frail during his first court appearance.

"I assure the court that I will not flee from justice," Rusesabagina said in his earlier bail application which was denied. His court appearance Friday was to appeal that rejection.

The denial of bail further alarmed his family, which along with some human rights and legal groups has expressed concern that his arrest is the latest example of Rwanda targeting critics.

"We have no hope that he can be given fair justice in Rwanda and ask for his immediate release," his daughter Carine Kanimba said on social media earlier this month.

Image captured by AP photographer symbolizes Beirut blast

By ZEINA KARAM
AND HASSAN AMMAR
Associated Press

JIIYEH, Lebanon — When Mustafa Kinno felt the ground shake and heard the deafening blast toward the port, he frantically called his brother living nearby.

No reply. He tried a neighbor, who said the family was sitting outside their apartment across from the port when it exploded. Terrified, Mustafa ran more than 2 miles to his brother, glass crunching under his feet.

When he arrived, first he spotted his niece Sedra's head poking out of the rubble. He collapsed and crawled toward her but couldn't move her. Then he found his younger niece, Hoda, slung over her shoulder and started walking.

An image of the two, captured by Associated Press photographer Hassan Ammar, has come to symbolize the devastation of the Aug. 4 blast at the Beirut port, which took 193 lives and wounded 6,500. In the photo, a dust-covered Hoda, 11, holds her body tightly against her uncle's shoulder, a gash bleeding from her forehead, eyes half-closed and face set in a



HASSAN AMMAR/AP

Hoda Kinno, 11, is evacuated by her uncle Mustafa Aug. 4, in the aftermath of a massive explosion at the port in Beirut, Lebanon.

grimace.

At least 43 Syrians like Hoda's family were among those who died in the explosion, plunging a war-weary community into further misery. Lebanon now hosts nearly 1 million Syrian refugees — about one in five people.

"It was always bad even before the explosion, but we were getting by," says the sisters' elder brother, Mahmoud. "Now life is unbearable."

Ali Kinno, 45, moved from the Aleppo region of Syria to Lebanon

in 2008 to find work, determined to provide a better life for his family. He got a job as concierge for the residential tower facing the port.

In 2011, Syria's civil war erupted. After northern Aleppo became a frontline a year later, Ali asked his family to join him in Beirut. But the family never quite settled there. There was the harassment and discrimination against Syrian refugees, and it only increased as the country's economic crisis set in.

It was just after 6 p.m. on Aug. 4 when Ali asked his 15-year-old Sedra to prepare the tea.

Sedra brought the tea and put it on a small table but didn't pour it — the family was animatedly discussing the pink-tinted smoke pouring from the port. The flames grew bigger, and the fire began making popping sounds.

Alarmed, Ali's wife called for them to go inside the apartment. That's when they heard the first explosion. But it was the second blast seconds later Ali says that seemed to lift the earth under the port and throw it in their direction.

"Tiles, stones, aluminium, glass. Everything fell on us," said Ali, who suffered a brain hemorrhage, several broken ribs, loss of vision in his left eye and damaged hearing in his right ear that day.

Sedra died instantly, pinned by tile cladding that rained down from the building. Hoda suffered a neck fracture and other injuries. Fatima fractured her spine, shattered a leg and could not move.

A month after the explosion, the family has been reunited in a temporary shelter in an apartment south of Beirut. They are devastated, still getting treated for injuries as the medical bills

pile up.

Hoda, wearing a neck brace, barely speaks. She says she doesn't remember the explosion and its aftermath. Fatima, her mother, says Hoda is obsessed with watching video clips of the blast on social media. She wakes up several times at night, sometimes crying.

Fatima is dealing with her own demons: "Everything scares me now; I see a door and imagine it will collapse on me," she says, seated on a sofa with a bandaged leg and a back brace.

Mahmoud, the 25-year-old eldest brother, is saddled with responsibilities, now that his father has lost his job. With his own 4-year-old son to worry about, he says he is willing to risk his life to smuggle himself out of Lebanon to reach Europe.

"I don't want to stay here another day," he says.

Ali keeps going back in his mind to that moment when he lost control over his family's life, feeling utterly helpless. Ten days after the explosion, he went to the building, stood in front of it and cried for his daughter.

"She was always in the kitchen. She loved to cook," he said. "I imagined her there."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

'Man cave' found under Grand Central station

NY NEW YORK — Three railroad workers have been suspended for turning a storage room under New York's Grand Central Terminal into an unauthorized "man cave" with a television, a refrigerator, a microwave and a futon couch, officials said Thursday.

A Metropolitan Transportation Authority investigation found that managers at Metro-North Railroad were unaware of the hideaway beneath Track 114.

"Many a New Yorker has fantasized about kicking back with a cold beer in a prime piece of Manhattan real estate — especially one this close to good transportation," MTA Inspector General Carolyn Pokorny said in a news release. "But few would have the chutzpah to commandeer a secret room beneath Grand Central Terminal."

Prep golfer gets ace on first shot at first match

MI OTSEGO — First high school match, first shot — hole in one.

Stephanie Scott, a freshman at Otsego High School, aced hole No. 8 Monday at Lake Doster Golf Club.

Stephanie told MLive.com that she couldn't see what happened, but the reaction was swift.

"Her dad was standing by the green, and we had some other parents up there, and one of them yelled back, 'It went in the hole!'" coach Matt Rayman said.

Stephanie, who started golfing at age 7, said she had never had a birdie or even a par. She finished the nine-hole round on 53.

"I don't remember exactly what I did, but I think I just stood there. ... It feels really awesome," she said of the hole-in-one.

Crash sends highway sign falling onto pickup

OH CLEVELAND — A dump truck struck the base of a sign on a Cleveland highway during the morning commute Thursday, causing the sign to fall on a passing pickup truck and killing one person in the pickup, authorities said.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol said the crash happened around 8:30 a.m. in the westbound lanes of Interstate 480 at the State Road exit.

The metal sign, which rises above three lanes of traffic, appeared to land on the hood of the pickup, which was traveling in a middle lane. It wasn't immediately clear if the person killed in the pickup was the driver or a passenger, or if the dump truck driver was injured.

Man dies after trying to save daughter in surf

NC COROLLA — A man died after trying to save his daughter from what officials say was life-threatening surf on the North Carolina coast. "It was a Virginia-Pilot reported that the incident occurred Tues-



MARK MORAN, THE (WILKES-BARRE, PA.) CITIZENS' VOICE/AP

Signs of fall

Stacy Field and her great nephew James King walk through a pumpkin patch at Whistle Pig in Noxen, Pa., on Wednesday.

day afternoon in Currituck County on the Outer Banks.

Currituck County spokesman Randall Edwards said the man was overcome by waves when he entered the water. Lifeguards from Corolla Beach Rescue responded within three minutes.

The man was pulled from the water in cardiac arrest. The man regained a pulse after emergency personnel performed CPR. But he died at a hospital several hours later.

"This is a sad ending to what had been a great example of teamwork and skill," Edwards said.

The man's daughter was rescued by lifeguards and was not injured.

3 suspects sought after about 40 guns stolen

SD RAPID CITY — Authorities are searching for three suspects after about 40 guns were stolen early Wednesday morning from a Rapid City gun shop.

Officers responded about 3:30 a.m. to a report of an alarm and discovered that a glass door on the shop's main entrance had been shattered. Surveillance video shows two suspects inside the store, including one person shattering various display cases with a baseball bat, police said. A third suspect is seen outside.

Police are working with the business to determine the specific firearms taken during the burglary. The release does not name the gun shop.

"Any time you have a large-scale gun theft like this, it's highly concerning for local law enforcement," said Rapid City Police Capt. John Olson, commander

THE CENSUS

O The number of single-use plastic and paper bags, as well as Styrofoam containers that would be allowed in New Jersey under legislation that passed the Democrat-led Legislature on Thursday. While some states impose a fee on paper bags, New Jersey's lawmakers say the state would be the first to ban paper bags. The prohibition would go into effect in 18 months under the bill, which goes next to Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy.

of the department's Criminal Investigations Division. "We have around 40 guns that are now unaccounted for in the hands of our criminal element."

Most troopers in state to get body cameras

VT WATERBURY — Most Vermont State Police troopers are going to be getting body cameras by the end of the year.

Officials are still working on the details of the policy for the cameras, including the public's access to view police videos.

Vermont State Police Capt. Garry Scott told WCAX-TV the cameras will be welcomed.

"It's about transparency and accountability," he said.

The inspection of state police body camera videos will be free after they have been redacted to protect privacy.

More than 200 troopers at barracks across the state will be outfitted with the body cameras, which have been delivered but are not yet in use. The cameras will turn on automatically when a trooper activates a cruiser's lights. The policy on when the cameras will be turned off is still being developed.

Brown bear breaks into zoo, kills popular alpaca

AK ANCHORAGE — A wild brown bear tunneled under perimeter fencing and killed a popular alpaca at the Alaska Zoo in Anchorage, officials said Wednesday. The bear was killed a day later by wildlife officials.

The bear had been hanging around the zoo, knocking over trash bins and breaking bear-proof latches before it got under the fence early Sunday when the facility was closed to the public.

"It went through the zoo and killed our older male alpaca, Caesar," executive director Patrick Lampi said.

He said the 16-year-old alpaca had arrived at the zoo when he was a year old. Caesar's companion, a younger alpaca named Fuzzy Charlie, escaped and was found unharmed.

Dead squirrels washing up on a beach at lake

MI GRAND HAVEN — Dead squirrels have been washing up on a Lake Michigan beach at a state park.

The squirrels likely drowned while trying to cross the Grand

River and then flowed to the lake and Grand Haven State Park, an expert said.

Nick Kalejs, a wildlife biologist at the Muskegon State Game Area, estimates about 100 in recent weeks.

"I don't think people should be unduly alarmed," Kalejs told MLive.com. "It's always distressing to see dead animals, and we certainly don't want any animal to suffer. There does seem to be some (precedent) for this type of thing, and hopefully it won't last too much longer."

Squirrels can swim, he said, but "clearly not all of them make it."

Search on for man who stole clinic's cat blood

FL ST. AUGUSTINE — A man caught on surveillance video is suspected of stealing cat blood from a veterinary clinic in Florida, sheriff's officials said.

The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office posted pictures showing the man who walked up to the door of the Anastasia Cat Clinic on Sept. 17.

The man was seen touching and inspecting an Antech Diagnostics blood box before leaving the area, sheriff's officials said. About 20 minutes later, a truck is seen in the parking area and a man wearing the same clothing walked up to the clinic and took the box. The box contained four vials of cat blood, the report said.

The vehicle then left the area. The box containing the blood vials amounted to a \$600 loss for the clinic, investigators said.

From wire reports

VIDEO GAMES



A transportive EXPERIENCE

Action-adventure game Raji highlights ancient India and the culture it birthed

By TODD MARTENS
Los Angeles Times

I played an hour of Raji: An Ancient Epic before I stopped and restarted. While it's not uncommon for players to reboot a game after learning its basic controls, that wasn't what made me want to begin again. Raji: An Ancient Epic reminded me of a sensation I hadn't thought about much during the pandemic: the feeling of exploring and discovering a new place.

Raji: An Ancient Epic isn't a replacement for a vacation, of course — no video game or virtual reality experience is yet that transportive — but it sparked a desire to analyze, to examine and to understand the in-game surroundings and its inspirations. A game that could be completed in a weekend stretched into a full week as I began writing down the names of deities such as Mahishasura and Kali for further research.

On the surface, Raji: An Ancient Epic is an action-adventure game.

Its tale of a young woman rescuing her brother from forces of the underworld can be told with many backdrops across numerous cultures. But Raji: An Ancient Epic, a labor of love that was often a struggle to get made by its small team, has a rather specific design intent. Beyond asking players to tackle its demonlike monsters with acrobatic fighting moves, the game seeks to highlight a place — ancient India — and the culture it birthed.

Thus, as I advanced through Raji: An Ancient Epic and dedicated myself to mastering the game's relatively robust combo-based fighting system, I discovered a decorative, lush world. The way

Raji mixes and matches game genres is slickly done — running, jumping and climbing through ruins requires precision and concentration. But for all of its sense play, the game also seems to possess an understanding of history. Its interactive text is built on mythologies that have gone largely unexplored in modern Western media, especially games, where an America obsession tends to dominate.



Raji: An Ancient Epic made me feel like a traveler called to dig deeper, to learn more outside the game about the Hindu and Balinese legends, stories and settings that are interwoven into the project. One area of the game was directly

inspired by the golden sandstone prevalent in the Indian city of Jaisalmer, home to the famed fortress whose tiered walls seem ripe for video game leaps. The intricate carvings of the Ajanta Caves served as inspiration, too, as our hero, Raji, traverses ruins with larger-than-life animal carvings.

"From the very beginning, we wanted to do a game that represents Hindu culture. We didn't see any game that was made from India that had that," says Shruti Ghosh, cofounder of the Pune, India-based Nodding Heads Games, whose founders had jobs at the Indian outposts of major game studios before going independent in 2017. "We had not seen a game made with this mythology. So we just went for it."

While the game uses religious iconography, seeking to re-create Indian

temples and their patiently painted murals of Hindu legends, Raji: An Ancient Epic itself is an original good-versus-evil story.

The gods and demons are shown in art throughout, and the game is narrated by the deities Durga and Vishnu. The small team uses the stories more to illustrate a lineage, to create the sensation that the player-led character is creating a new myth. Great pains, however, were taken to show reverence.

"Smudging the image of any god was a big no. Even small things, like in Hindu culture, your feet cannot point toward a god," says studio cofounder Avichal Singh.

"This is a rule," he continues. "Your feet shouldn't be pointing toward gods. It's disrespectful. If you have gods on your table, you can't put your feet up there. We've taken care of such small things. There was a moment where Raji was doing a wall-run over a particular statue, and we could not do that. The story of the game is the gods are watching you and blessing you, so there's no reason to have any kind of offense toward a god. It helped the game."

Completing the game, which is currently available for the Nintendo Switch and coming to the PC, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One in October, became something of a mission for the team. For Ghosh, the more she studied the art of medieval India, the more she saw the game as a way to showcase traditions that are being lost — a point that was underlined when she and the studio's third cofounder, Ian Maude, were in Bali and learned about passed-down mask-making traditions.

She crafted the game's hand-painted art style, including many of the murals that dot the digital rockwork. Occasionally, as Raji runs past them, they spring to life, becoming more animated as the narration tells of the bygone but venerable myths of the Hindu gods. Scaled down to the game's miniature art style, it's a Pahari-inspired look that wouldn't be out of place in an ancient manuscript.

"In India, all these art forms are slowly dying," Ghosh says. "Nobody wants to learn this anymore. Where are they going to be used? This is the reason

I wanted to pay tribute to that style. It's so beautiful. It's so intriguing, and the amount of hard work, the exact patience you need to do this kind of art, is mind-blowing. But it's going to be lost with time. So for people to see that there is something like this, and it can result in another art form, is something I wanted to bring to the game."

Ghosh also orchestrated the game's interstitial scenes, which take their look from Balinese shadow puppetry. Here, the orange-yellow backdrops contrast the fragility of the paper-like cutouts with a sinister tone. And for those paying extra close attention, Singh says the fighting combos that players can piece together specifically recall martial arts moves that originated in India.

All this detail was helped in part by the time it took to make the game, even if the team was in a panic after a 2017 campaign on crowdfunding site Kickstarter failed. "We used all our savings," says Maude. While the team eventually linked with investor Super.com and also received in 2018 an Unreal Dev Grant from Epic Games, they were at one point asking their families for grocery money. "We were desperate for money," says Maude. "Shruti sold her apartment. But our families could see how important this project was to us. We were literally using all our funds to keep a roof over our heads. Us three weren't taking a salary."

Of course, it helped, says the team, that when they went to family seeking cash, they were working on a game that was encouraging them to discover a history that, as children, they sometimes rolled their eyes at.

"We've learned so much about things that we didn't know about our own gods," Ghosh says. "I was calling my mother going, 'Is this true? Is this actually true?' I come from a part of India where goddess Durga is worshipped the most, and my family has been worshipping goddess Kali since who knows when. For me, to read all this stuff has been eye-opening because I didn't care much when growing up. This has been formative for us too."

Platforms: PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch
Online: rajithegame.com

Set in ancient India, the action-adventure game Raji: An Ancient Epic follows a young girl chosen by the gods to stand against the demonic invasion of the human realm.

NODDING HEADS GAMES/TNS

HEALTH AND FITNESS

Fall flourish

Tips for the home, relationships and mindfulness to make the most of spending autumn in a pandemic



iStock photos

Fall won't be wasted, even in a pandemic, if you use the time to prioritize your relationships (above) and make your home more cozy, for instance by gathering pine cones (below).

Special to The Washington Post

Last week, we offered fall tips for food and fitness. This week, check out how to let the spirit of fall inspire your home, relationships and mindfulness.

Home

■ Bring the outdoors in

Making a home cozy for fall can be as simple as gathering pine cones in a centerpiece bowl. For something different this year, Hannah Morgan, owner of the Seattle-based botanical studio and garden Fortunate Orchard, suggests using wire to attach pine cones to branches for vases.

"The beauty of using pine cones or branches is that they don't need water," she explains. Make different heights of these pine-cone sticks for the vase and mix them with dried grasses or botanicals.

"A lot of time for me," she continues, "the gathering of all of these things is the best part, and the most important part, especially right now when we're stressed out."

Take a walk early in the fall (when it's dry out) and look for grasses, cones and seed pods that have fallen. For an arrangement that will evolve into winter, Morgan suggests making a garland, stringing pine cones and grasses with twine and ribbon, to be laid flat on a dining table or hung from a mantle. Add some dried leaves when they fall. Come Thanksgiving, you can add decorative squash, and in winter, evergreen branchies.

It's a nice rotating exhibit in your living space," Morgan says. Because the base of these arrangements doesn't need water, they will last throughout the season.

■ Or make yourself at home outside

As we begin to escape summer's sizzle and face the responsibilities of fall, making good use of your home's outdoor spaces might just be what keeps you sane, New York interior designer Hilary Matt says.

She recommends starting with a furniture arrangement that works for all seasons. For a balcony, that can be a weather-resistant bistro set. For a patio, a dining table and chairs are great for cookouts or messy pumpkin carving come October. String lights or tiki torches can add a festive touch.

Stow heavy blankets, such as wool



ones, in baskets away from the elements, or splurge on a heat lamp to ensure that you can enjoy your outdoor space into the night and as the evenings grow colder.

S'mores, anyone?

"One of the best things that people can do in their backyard when it's cold out is add a fire pit," Matt says. "It's a good way to social distance because you can have people over but sit far apart."

— Lindsey M. Roberts

Human connections

■ Lend a helping hand

One of the best ways we can volunteer our time right now is simply loving our neighbor. We can run errands for the elderly, bring meals to friends out of work and make a better effort to talk to relatives on the phone. This is also a great time for families to come together and bond over serving others, says David Thomas, the director of family counseling at Daystar Counseling in Nashville.

"There are many opportunities for families to give and serve on a national level during the pandemic," he explains. "My challenge to families is to look for local opportunities to serve as well."

Besides picking up groceries or medication, he suggests baking for neighbors, decorating driveways with encouraging messages in sidewalk chalk and offering to walk dogs or pick up school supplies.

■ Prioritize meaningful relationships

Loneliness has surely hit us all this year.

"Virtual is wonderful, but I think we're all wanting to talk in person," says Kim Grevler, a clinical social worker and life

coach in New York.

What if, though, this were an ideal time to step back and evaluate the relationships in our lives? Ask yourself, she says, if you get together with certain people only out of obligation.

"Are we settling for some friendships and relationships?" she asks. This may sound harsh, but it doesn't have to be. It could simply mean that, for example, even though you like your book club friends, you want to prioritize time elsewhere. Maybe that's more time taking care of your parents or intentional time with your kids.

The prompt Grevler gives her clients is: "If I were honest with myself. ..." If you were honest with yourself, who do you want to spend time with right now? Which groups would you quit? Which would you join? Do you wish you had a circle for your favorite hobby? Get the people you want down on your calendar, and then evaluate your flexibility. Don't be afraid to see people, even six feet apart, especially if it's outdoors. It will take time to push past the fear. Grevler says that if you're feeling uncomfortable, the other person is probably feeling uncomfortable, too.

"If you're feeling lonely and unsettled, don't blame yourself for that and shun yourself," she explains. "Use it as ammo to connect more with other people."

— Lindsey M. Roberts

Mindfulness

■ Take a deep breath (or five)

Deep breathing is a great way to calm down. But taking a deep breath is not easy to do when we are stressed, because

anxiety often manifests as tightness in the throat and jaw. That's why you can often hear stress in someone's voice. Before we can start taking deep breaths, then, we have to open the vocal cords.

To do that, take three to five continuous sniffs of air through your nose, as if you are smelling a fragrant flower. Then, exhale a long slow breath out of your mouth with rounded lips.

Next, without engaging your shoulders and chest, try taking a deep breath through your nose all the way into your lower lungs or belly. Put your hands on your belly to feel your stomach rising. If necessary, repeat the sniffs until you can take that deep breath.

When we're stressed, we primarily use our mouth to breathe into the upper lungs. Breathing into our lower lungs, on the other hand, stimulates the vagus nerve, which in turn activates a relaxation response (decreasing your heart rate and blood pressure). It also allows the lungs to distribute more oxygen throughout the body, enhancing the calming effect.

— Amanda McCracken

■ Get hooked on crochet

Knitters have a tendency to look down on crochet, the latter being, technically, a less difficult art. Those of us who love crochet respond with a shrug. "Whatever," we say, as we launch into some wild variation on a pattern, making up the rules as we go and reveling in a magical flow between mind and body that, yoga-like, instills calm while strengthening the inner core of one's being.

Crochet is a gorgeously forgiving medium, allowing the freedom to explore without having to worry about the dreaded "dropping" of stitches that strikes fear in the hearts of novice knitters. Where knitting is for "experts," crochet is for everyone, and can be learned in 10 minutes.

Yet this simple craft, along with a basic algorithmic pattern, can be used to generate complex curving "hyperbolic" surfaces that mimic the shapes of coral. For 15 years, my twin sister, Christine, and I, joined by thousands of women worldwide, have been working on the Crochet Coral Reef, a global art and science project we created. Together we've whiled away countless hours making sculptural forms with our hooks as we binge-watch "Xena: Warrior Princess" and other outie feminist delights.

"I didn't waste an evening," I can say. "Look what a fantastic form I created!"

— Margaret Wertheim

MOVIES



Left: The critically acclaimed film "12 Years a Slave," starring Michael Fassbender, from left, Lupita Nyong'o and Chiwetel Ejiofor, tells the true story of Solomon Northup, a free black man who was kidnapped in New York and sold into slavery.

Fox Searchlight Pictures

Right: Cynthia Erivo gave cinematic life to Harriet Tubman in 2019's "Harriet," but there are many more revolutionary women's tales to tell onscreen.

Focus Features



Depicting slavery

Films tackling topic have an uphill battle to climb with critics, historians and audiences

BY HELENA ANDREWS-DYER
The Washington Post

What makes a good slave movie? The very question can feel too light considering the two-ton subject matter, but it's top of mind this week with the release of "Antebellum," a thriller by the producers of "Get Out" that uses the horrors of slavery as an allegory for America's long-overdue racial reckoning.

It's a lot — and yet, not enough. The film stars Janelle Monáe in overlapping roles as a 21st-century professional smarty named Veronica and an enslaved woman named Eden who is forced into labor on a cotton plantation. With its time-blending narrative, the film attempts to reframe the hard-to-watch scenes of sexual violence, kidnapping and whippings so common in movies about slavery with a plot twist most will see coming from a country mile.

Why would the filmmakers even go there? Slavery is in right now. In 2017, "Get Out" — Jordan Peele's directorial debut and Oscar winner for best original screenplay — employed the themes of bondage and stolen humanity to weave a modern horror story about race and racism that felt different but still familiar. The film ushered in a new wave of cinematic explorations of slavery with a twist. Peele's sophomore effort "Us" and next year's "Candyman" have also drilled into layers of oppression to examine society's ills. "Antebellum" appeared to be following suit.

Led by first-time directors Gerard Bush and Christopher Renz, the film is the latest addition to a complicated canon that includes movies as problematic as "Gone with the Wind," as fantastical as "Django Unchained," and as revered as "12 Years a Slave."

"You have to be really careful and responsible with [this topic]," Bush said in an interview.

Because like the films that came before it, "Antebellum" isn't just a movie. It can't be. Films about slavery have an uphill battle to climb with critics, historians and audiences. There is a responsibility lurking behind each reel: A dialogue should be sparked; perspectives should be shifted. It's an incredibly tall order for any piece of art but represents the peculiar conundrum of films about what Bush called "this country's original sin."

According to the reviews, "Antebellum" doesn't hit the mark.

Washington Post chief film critic Ann

Hornaday called it a "muddled misfire of a fantasy-horror film." Entertainment Weekly was similarly unimpressed by the "underbaked slavery fable" which, according to the Hollywood Reporter, "is shallow, more interested in making a Big Point than digging meaningfully into its subject." The Globe and Mail took the entire genre to task: "At the end of the day, if this is what contemporary slave narratives are belatedly evolving into, I'm not sure that the genre is worth rehabilitating."

So, the big question still remains: What makes a good slave movie? Or, perhaps more important, what makes a bad one? For the experts — researchers, teachers, writers, actors — the answer lies somewhere between holding on to the past and pushing the narrative forward.

When historian Dexter Gabriel saw "12 Years a Slave" in 2013 at a Brooklyn theater, his reaction was simple: "Finally."

"It was the first time, as far as a major

Hollywood film, where you had a Black writer who was a descendant of slaves," said Gabriel, who teaches a course on slavery and film at the University of Connecticut.

Before "12 Years a Slave" — written by John Ridley and directed by Steve McQueen, who are both Black men — major studio films about slavery were almost exclusively written, directed and produced by white men, and it showed.

Though Steven Spielberg's "Amistad," released in 1997, was one of the first big-budget films to depict the horrors of the Middle Passage on screen, it is, at its core, a courtroom drama starring white men. "Glory," a 1989 movie about one of the first Black regiments of the Union Army, which garnered Denzel Washington his first Oscar, focuses much of its narrative on the struggles of Col. Robert Gould Shaw, played by Matthew Broderick.

Gabriel's syllabus begins in 1915 with D.W. Griffith's wildly popular racist propaganda film "The Birth of a Nation" and moves up through the decades to include such films as "Glory" and "Get Out," as well as older films such as "The Little Rebel" (1935), "Gone with the Wind" (1939) and "Mandingo" (1975), examining each for its historical accuracy, cultural context and entertainment value.

"I ruin movies for my students, even ones I like," he said.

But "12 Years a Slave" is one Gabriel likes. The Oscar-winning film is based on the 1853 memoir of Solomon Northup, a free man from New York who was kidnapped and enslaved in D.C. McQueen's big-screen adaptation consistently gets gold stars from American historians because the film is based on actual events,

centers on the story of a Black man and depicts both the stark brutality and ordinary day-to-day lives of the enslaved.

Other films from the 2010s such as "Django Unchained," "The Birth of a Nation" and "Harriet" have their moments, but don't quite rise to the top of most experts' list. "Django Unchained" was Quentin Tarantino's shoot-'em-up fantasy. "The Birth of a Nation," about the revolt led by Nat Turner, was overwrought.

"Harriet," about the American hero Harriet Tubman, could have told the fascinating and lesser-known tale of her work as a Union Army spy.

"All of these movies try to reinforce the notion that slavery was bad, which we all already know," said Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh, a historian focusing on the intersections of gender, religion and slavery.

"What I would like for us to do with these films is to get to a place where we valorize the work of the people who lived and died" on plantations, said Wells-Oghoghomeh. "Those are the vast majority of the ancestors of people who call themselves African Americans."

For Joy Banner, the director of marketing at the Whitney Plantation in Louisiana, one of the few such historic sites in the country that centers on the experience of those enslaved there (and not Pinterest weddings), the goal of any good movie about slavery should be to humanize the people this country considered chattel.

"We created something beautiful out of it — our bonds, our networks. That is not captured enough," said Banner, a descendant of the plantation for which she works.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

MOVIES

Confronting the pain

Horrors of slavery at center of Monae's 'Antebellum'

By JOHN CARUCCI
Associated Press

Janelle Monae says she "felt so much rage and anger" when she stepped onto a former slave plantation for the first time to film the psychological thriller "Antebellum."

In the movie, the pop star and actress plays a successful modern-day author who finds herself trapped in alternate time periods, including the terrifying reality of a runaway slave. Remembering the moment she arrived on that plantation set, she becomes visibly emotional.

"My ancestors were stolen. They didn't steal slaves or servants. They stole doctors. They stole lawyers. They stole musicians. They stole mothers, fathers. Humans that mattered," she said.

Much of the horror of "Antebellum" is in its unflinching depiction of the violence inflicted on slaves. Monae hopes the film acts as a catalyst for discussions about systemic racism in a politically divided nation. She says it's essential to "confront the pain" of the past in order to understand the present state of Black Americans — and address police brutality and social injustice.

"You cannot talk about the present and everything we're dealing with the police without knowing the past and understanding that in the South during the Civil War that the first police institution was the same slave patrol meant to control, meant to monitor free slaves, meant to kill, meant to discriminate against free slaves," Monae said.

The movie grew out of a literal nightmare that co-writer-director Gerard Bush had after his father died. He awoke remembering "this woman, Eden, that was screaming desperately for help that felt like cross-

dimensional in a sense."

"I was really emotional from the experience. And I took out my notepad and took all of the notes from the nightmare," Bush said.

Bush and filmmaking partner Christopher Renz say they used 1970s horror films as inspiration. They hope to unsettle audiences when depicting terrors of the pre-abolition South. The Oscar-winning 1939 film "Gone With the Wind" became a touchstone. Bush describes it as both a "horror film" and "a piece of really effective propaganda."

"We went so far as to obtain the lenses from 'Gone with the Wind' to shoot our movie so that we could take that same weaponry that was intended to misinform, to correct the record," Bush said.

In addition to Monae, the cast also includes Jack Huston, Eric Lange, Kiersey Clemons, Gabourey Sidibe and Jena Malone.

Like many films this year, the pandemic has led to multiple delays in releasing "Antebellum." Bush notes the significance of the settled final date: "We didn't do it deliberately. But it just so happens that the date of September 18th is the anniversary of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850," he said.

Bush said he realizes that audiences will be uncomfortable watching the film, but he believes that unsettling time calls for unsettling art.

"We need to catalyze a national dialogue or advance the dialogue around this country's original sin. I think that we're going to need to confront it head on and dismantle the scaffolding that keeps these inequities in place so that we can build something new, more equitable for everyone," Bush said.

FROM PAGE 14

Banner's thoughts on the subject aren't just academic. She is currently working on her own script about a little-known African American hero. It's a spycraft story set against the backdrop of the American Civil War. Her personal charge, and artistic struggle, is to tell "a story that is a relief from the trauma that also does justice to the trauma."

What's missing from so many films about the institution of slavery is variety, said Banner. There aren't just more stories to be told, but different stories — nuanced narratives that depict the vast experiences of those who were enslaved in America from 1619 through the end of the Civil War. Not every slave narrative is cotton fields, barefoot escapes through the woods, barking dogs and torn flesh.

Who's telling the tale of Robert Smalls, who in 1862 commanded a Confederate ship, picked up his family and then sailed to freedom? Or the story of Ellen Craft, whose skin was fair enough that she passed for white and, in 1848, dressed up as a wealthy male planter, pretended to be her husband William's lawyer, and escaped with him to Philadelphia, traveling most of the way in luxury?

"There are more cathartic stories to be told," said Banner.

Looking at the past decade, one would be forgiven for thinking that movies about slavery are plentiful. Since the 2012 releases of "Django Unchained" and "Lincoln," there has been a steady stream of slave films. Besides 2013's "12 Years a Slave," the following years brought "Freedom" (2014), "Free State of Jones" (2016), "The Birth of a Nation" (2016) and "Harriet" (2019) to theaters. "Emperor" premiered in March, and "Antebellum" will be on video on demand Friday.

But despite the uptick in titles, movies about slavery are "still exceedingly rare," said Gabriel.

The dearth of films about the subject is a double-edged sword. Because there are so few, each film that does address it usually attempts to do too much.

"Every film has to be the film about all slavery, and it can't," said Gabriel.

This is the reason some question the very value of films about it. Why make them if the bar is so high and so often missed?

For actor Djimon Hounsou, whose first major role was starring in "Amistad," the opportunity could not be missed to bring to the masses the tale of a group of kidnapped Africans who revolted against their captors.

"I was completely invested to my bones in playing this character," said Hounsou, who won an NAACP Image Award for playing Cinque, the real-life Mende tribesman who led a revolt on the slave ship *La Amistad* in 1839. "I have never been more alive than when I was playing that role. I was so connected. I was so gone. It's difficult to articulate."

When "Amistad" was released, it sparked a renewed dialogue about race in America that the

country is still struggling with today.

"I think it's painful for America to keep avoiding the conversation because a decade later, you're going to find yourself here again having to deal with similar issues," said Hounsou. "You do need to talk about it. You need to regularly remind the new generation where they came from, who their ancestors were."

"Imagery is the way that people conquer the world these days. If you can't tell your story, you're done."

Especially because, he added, the other side will continue to tell theirs.

That lesson — that history, cinematic or otherwise, belongs to the storytellers — is one that "Antebellum" directors Bush and Renz had hoped to bring home with their film.

Their opening tracking shot is directly inspired by "Gone with the Wind." Using the very same lenses as the 1939 film, the first scene of "Antebellum" depicts an idyllic plantation in all its Southern-filtered glory, complete with the lush greenery and stately big house. Then the camera leads viewers past all that ill-gotten beauty to the brutality happening behind the scenes.

The directors' goal was to "correct the record and use the same weaponry that was used to create this false narrative of the noble antebellum South," said Bush. "I don't know that I would even consider 'Antebellum' within the category of those movies just based on what it is. It's something entirely different."

It is a film that uses slavery, and specifically the pre-Civil War time period consistently portrayed on-screen, as a plot device. Slavery is the point. As such, "Antebellum" is expected to do several things at once: educate, inspire, activate. And while valiant efforts are made to do something different — the plot centers on an enslaved, empowered Black woman's story, and notably doesn't let white women off the hook — the film falls short of rejuvenating the genre.

So what makes a good slave movie? One that tells a different tale. One that doesn't try to squeeze a centuries-long saga into one or two hours. And one that gives audiences something to leave the theater with besides trauma, especially in a time when brutal images of Black bodies aren't just in history books, but on the 6 o'clock news.

Because good movies about slavery are still important tools in shifting cultural tide.

"When it comes to the history of people of African descent in the U.S., we are still in a moment where we need to be humanized. We see over and over the consequences of us not being understood as full human beings," said Wells-Oghoghome, the historian.

Gabriel's hope is that the next wave of films released about the topic are written, directed and produced by Black people.

"That's going to push the direction we see these films take," he said. "There are untold stories to tell."



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OPINION

Here's how hard it will be to distribute a vaccine

By KENNETH GORELICK
Special to The Washington Post

Americans have placed great trust that the arrival of a vaccine against COVID-19 will finally end our long national pandemic nightmare. The Trump administration has claimed that 100 million doses of a vaccine could be available by the end of the year and that they will begin to ship within 24 hours of getting the regulatory go-ahead. But there are good reasons to be skeptical of those claims, most of all that developing and manufacturing the vaccine is just the beginning. We also need to distribute and administer it, and that's where the administration's optimistic timeline starts to fall apart.

As a physician who's helped make biopharma products for more than 35 years, I can attest to the extensive planning, patience and precision that these stages require. Rapidly distributing a safe and effective vaccine across the nation is likely to be one of the most significant logistical challenges ever undertaken by the government within our borders. President Donald Trump's handling of the pandemic — disorganized, haphazard and suggests that neither he nor his administration are up to the task. To the contrary, an administration that has eliminated nonpartisan careerists throughout government in favor of professionally inexperienced opportunists is unlikely to pull off the monumental task they've set for themselves.

For the sake of our country, let's imagine that on Dec. 31, 2020, one or more vaccines have been approved by FDA, and hundreds of millions of doses of each are ready to ship. First, the supply chain needs to be filled and the drug delivered to the physicians who will administer it. Fiz-

er's product may require ultracold storage at minus-94 degrees Fahrenheit. This type of specialized storage is not available in your doctor's office: It is found in universities and research centers. If the first vaccine to be approved requires this kind of storage, the logistics of distribution will be daunting.

One solution might be to mobilize the military to distribute the vaccine, but even then there will be substantial hurdles. The Defense Department's mission is to get troops and military supplies to specific areas as quickly as possible. While those capacities are formidable, they do not include maintaining large quantities of vaccine at ultralow temperatures with mandatory recording of temperatures needed to meet regulatory requirements that assure the vaccine remains potent. Nor does the military routinely deliver troops and supplies to thousands of communities at once.

These difficulties would only be multiplied if a second vaccine is approved rapidly. Keep in mind that, like many other vaccinations, those that are ultimately approved for COVID-19 may require two doses. Since the vaccines are not interchangeable: you need to have the same vaccine for both shots, so if there are no consistent vaccines being shipped around the country, those handling distribution would need to make sure that the correct formulations made it to the correct communities in the correct quantities. Does the military have the existing, FDA-compliant systems to assure this?

Then there's the question of how many people will need to be vaccinated. The most optimistic model says 43% will need to have potent antibodies to achieve herd immunity, which would mean 142 million people. The administration claims that they reach that benchmark in one year. Of

course, some millions will already have antibodies, but they are only part of the number needed. We can barely get that many people to wear a mask, despite the proven risk reduction. And a Kaiser Family Foundation poll shows more than half of Americans are still wary of a COVID-19 vaccine. Even those who take a vaccine may not be permanently protected. Recent data suggest mutations are increasing the contagiousness of the virus. So far there is no word that any of these mutations will allow the virus to avoid the vaccine, but if they do, we may see further slowdowns in vaccine development.

Even if there are no snafus and each of the approximately 7,000 U.S. hospitals has an ultracold freezer, they will need to vaccinate 142 million Americans two times, one for each dose. That means an average of 40,000 visits or nearly 800 per week at each hospital. All the while, those facilities will also need to continue to provide routine care, including to patients who have already been infected with the coronavirus.

The supply chain issues are, in short, of an unprecedented magnitude. While all Americans hope that everything will go well, it is really too much to hope for. Every involved party is pitching in heartily: the pharma industry, the people who volunteer for the trials, the FDA, the military, the health care professionals and ancillary services and the hospitals. However, the lack of a focus on planning, absence of transparency from the Defense Department, and unrealistic statements and dearth of leadership by the president is setting us up for a monumental failure.

Kenneth Gorelick is a board-certified internal medicine and pulmonary disease specialist and a member of the Committee to Protect Medicine. He has more than 35 years of experience in the development of drugs, biologics, and medical devices in the health care sector.

Address public health woes before the next pandemic

By MARC LIPSITCH and YONATAN GRAD
Special to The Washington Post

Even as the world still struggles against the coronavirus pandemic, it isn't too early to start cataloguing lessons learned and to patch vulnerabilities. In past centuries, cholera and typhoid outbreaks in the United States prompted investments in clean water and sanitation, which helped control these and other infections. Efforts to control the mosquitoes that carry malaria and yellow fever led to the use of screens on windows and doors, which also keep out other insect-borne diseases.

Similarly, the extraordinary speed of the race to develop a COVID-19 vaccine has been facilitated by initiatives prompted by the SARS and MERS viruses and the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014. And efforts to understand coronavirus transmission and evaluate reinfection benefit from advances in viral genome sequencing and analysis that were developed in response to Ebola, Zika, influenza and other viral diseases.

But the COVID-19 experience shows that large holes remain in U.S. public health infrastructure, especially the mechanisms to generate, collect, analyze and compare data. This deficiency has hampered every aspect of pandemic control.

Early on, communities rushed to set up testing to see when the virus had arrived. They wanted to make constant measurements of how it was spreading and see how well control measures were working. Testing shortages, overlap with flu season and the mild illness seen in many people made it hard to tell when the virus started spreading until it was too late in many locations. Surveillance systems — counting and tracking infected people, monitoring

the course of the epidemic and projecting resources needed as the epidemic unfolds — are inflexible and outdated. The systems have been undermined by the long neglect of local and state public health. Fundamentally, there is no common system for collecting and reporting the key numbers, confounding efforts to control disease spread.

Eight months into the pandemic, states and counties across the country are struggling to track the spread of the virus through routine, reliable testing of representative members of their communities. Efforts to help hospitals and public health systems by modernizing the coronavirus-related demand for intensive care have been stymied by this fact: There is insufficient information available about the duration of stays in intensive care units in the United States. And few jurisdictions provide specific data on where their epidemiologists determine transmission is occurring, making it difficult to identify areas that can reopen safely or health care facilities that need to bolster their prevention measures.

The list could go on. The common denominator is an antiquated and understaffed system that links data from clinical records and public health monitoring in ways that provide evidence on how to control the virus while minimizing the disruption to the economy and society. Electronic medical records — envisioned as a boon for public-health surveillance, providing data that could be readily analyzed — turn out to be much better for billing than for the exchange of data.

The next phase of pandemic response that might be placed at risk by these spotty data systems is vaccination. Accurate records of who has been vaccinated, when and with which vaccine will be essential. They will encourage trust in the safety

and effectiveness of vaccines, ensure prioritization of the groups that should first receive the vaccine, and aid in monitoring vaccine impact on the pandemic. A patchwork of local systems, already strained, is not well-suited to this task.

Solving this problem will require significant investment to link public health agencies at the local level to state and national databases, and to ensure that the information coming into these systems is of adequate quality.

Nontraditional sources of data — tracking mobility through cellphones to see how people respond to lockdowns, measuring viral RNA in sewage and predicting epidemic trends through analysis of Internet searches — potentially provide information faster and with higher resolution than traditional epidemiologic data. But efforts to make use of them remain bespoke collaborations between companies or academic groups and individual health departments. These scale-up efforts are potentially game-changing ideas pioneered by several of our colleagues, remains just that, an idea. Calls for a national pandemic forecasting center have so far gone unfunded.

All this will require new investment in these good ideas, IT infrastructure, highly trained personnel, and equipment. In large numbers of diagnostic tests, the improvements would aid in fighting the current pandemic, and they will be essential weapons against future pandemics and other major health threats, such as antimicrobial resistance, that will still loom when the world emerges from COVID-19, the disease the coronavirus causes.

Marc Lipsitch, an epidemiologist, leads the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics at the Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where Yonatan Grad is an assistant professor of immunology and infectious diseases.

Frazz



Dilbert



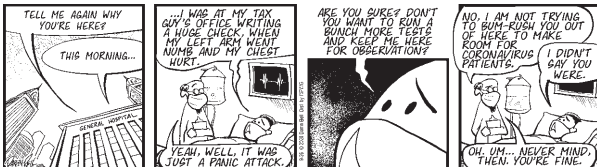
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



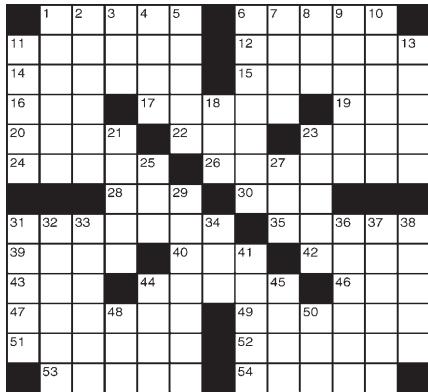
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



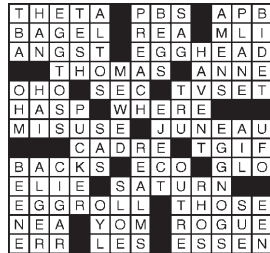
ACROSS

- 1 Florida city
- 6 Envelope parts
- 11 Not as flabby
- 12 "Sorry Not Sorry" singer Demi
- 14 Speak from memory
- 15 Martini garnishes
- 16 Nabokov novel
- 17 Dasher's boss
- 19 Inc. cousin
- 20 Albacore, e.g.
- 22 "Mayday"
- 23 Spanish greeting
- 24 Masts
- 26 Tea urn
- 28 Hosp. parts
- 30 Chairman of China
- 31 Pontiac sports car
- 35 Fighting
- 39 Wife of Zeus
- 40 Frenzied
- 42 Trig function
- 43 In the style of
- 44 Critic Roger
- 46 FDR project
- 47 Angry rant
- 49 Corsage flower
- 51 Paint basecoat
- 52 In a prying way

DOWN

- 1 Busy
- 2 Secret matters
- 3 2001, to Cato
- 4 Favorites
- 5 Locales
- 6 Wreckage at sea
- 7 "Damn Yankees" vamp
- 8 Bird (Pref.)
- 9 "Conditioned reflex" Nobelist
- 10 "A Streetcar Named Desire" cry
- 11 Dorm alternatives
- 13 Film trophy
- 18 Refusals
- 21 Concert venue
- 23 Owl sounds
- 25 Soon-to-be grads
- 27 Goat's plaint
- 29 "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" actor Andy
- 31 "— show biz!"
- 32 Depends (on)
- 33 Noah's landfall
- 34 Actress West
- 36 Hip
- 37 Blacksmiths' blocks
- 38 Prepared
- 41 Unmanned plane
- 44 Paradise
- 45 Walked (on)
- 48 Will Smith biopic
- 50 Hit CBS series

Answer to Previous Puzzle



9-26

CRYPTOQUIP

HA T Z R B Q Z O S T G Y B O P M B T

R B X M T D H F Y X Q B L B A X G F Z I,

H D Z P M O T X S F Y B S ' N B R X O B

O Z L Z I I B T B I N X F H Z L T.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I THINK THAT MAN PUTS TOO MUCH POMADE IN HIS HAIR. HE APPLIES IT TO A SLICKENING DEGREE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals Y

STANLEY CUP FINAL/MMA



JASON FRANSON, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Tampa Bay Lightning right wing Nikita Kucherov, right, scores Wednesday on Dallas Stars goalie Anton Khudobin during the first period of Game 3 of the Stanley Cup Final in Edmonton, Alberta.

Have Bolts solved Stars' Khudobin?

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The goaltender known as "Dobby" has lost some of his magic in the Stanley Cup Final.

After three rounds of dominant play put him in the playoff MVP mix, Anton Khudobin has allowed the Tampa Bay Lightning to score eight goals over the past two games to take a 2-1 series lead on the Dallas Stars. Solving Khudobin is a combination of the Lightning making it harder on him in multiple ways, perhaps finding the right place to shoot the puck at, Khudobin playing the most hockey of his NHL career and the Stars breaking down in front of him — and it might be enough to help Tampa Bay lift the Cup.

"There were three shots that beat him blocker side in Game 3.

... Have they figured something out?" said retired goaltender Brian Boucher, who's rinks inside the bubble as an NBC Sports analyst. "It might be a little fatigue and it also just might be that, you know what, Tampa's got a really good team that's got some great offensive weapons, that's got some guys that play with some real grit and sandpaper that's wearing down some of the Dallas defense and they're exposing them right now a little bit."

Khudobin posted a .920 save percentage in his first 19 games this postseason and set a Cup Final record, making 22 stops in the third period of the Stars' Game 1 win. He has allowed eight goals on 60 shots — an .867 save percentage — in five periods since and got pulled after the second period of Game 3 only because coach Rick Bowness wanted to rest him with a back-to-back coming up.

"We need to play better in front of him," Bowness said. "He doesn't have to do anything better. He doesn't have to do anything different. He just has to keep doing what he's doing, and in terms of our team, it would

NHL scoreboard

Stanley Cup Final (Best-of-seven; x-if necessary) At Edmonton, Alberta

Tampa Bay 2, Dallas 1
Tampa Bay 3, Dallas 1
Saturday, Game 5, Dallas 2
Friday, Game 4
Saturday, Game 5 (AFN-Atlantic, 2 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT)
x-Monday, Sept. 28, Game 6
x-Wednesday, Sept. 30, Game 7

help him a lot if we didn't make it so easy for the other team to play against us sometimes."

That's why it's such a multifaceted situation. It starts with Tampa Bay, the most talented team Khudobin and the Stars have faced since hockey resumed with a core and coach who have been here before.

The onslaught started with two power-play goals early in Game 2 that got Nikita Kucherov, Brayden Point and Victor Hedman going, and they've taken fewer shots to the outside that Khudobin can stop and build up his confidence. They're waiting it out for those Grade-A chances.

"You'd rather have 45 shots from the outside and everybody's boxing out and there's no second-chance opportunities," Boucher said. "The high-end players for Tampa, I do think in general these guys look for the better play. And really high-skilled players, guys of high offensive IQ, they're not just OK with getting the puck to the net."

That's why Barclay Goodrow's assertion that the Lightning are just getting the puck to the net more isn't quite right. They put up five goals on 29 shots in Game 3 by getting to prime scoring areas.

Then there's Khudobin. The 34-year-old had never started an NHL playoff game before August.

"I think the amount of hockey he's played, eventually it catches up to you," said Boucher, a veteran of 43 playoff games.

UFC 253: Champion gets chance to prove himself

Middleweight Adesanya seeks redemption vs. Costa

BY GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

After Israel Adesanya finally took up mixed martial arts full-time three years ago, he rocketed through the UFC ranks with a thrilling, athletic style of fighting. He even became an undisputed champion in just his 18th professional bout.

But a few days before the coronavirus pandemic upended the sporting world, Adesanya looked nothing like a superstar in his first title defense.

Six months after his desultory win over Yoel Romero in Las Vegas, Adesanya (19-0, 14 KOs) is on the other side of the globe to defend his middleweight belt against longtime antagonist Paulo Costa (13-0, 11 KOs) in the main event of UFC 253 on Fight Island in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

Adesanya couldn't seize the spotlight against Romero, but he vows to amaze the world against Costa, another musclebound opponent who seems a challenging target for Adesanya's otherworldly striking ability.

"I feel like that was the valley of my story, and now it's time to rise again," Adesanya said. "This is my time, and this one is going to shoot me into the stratosphere."

At UFC 248 in March, a patient, boring performance against a nearly inert Romero kept the Nigeria-born, New Zealand-based Adesanya from taking the quantum leap to international stardom that he and the UFC expected.

Instead, the voluble champion spent more time explaining why he hadn't thrilled his fans — and sparring with Costa, who jumped at the chance to needle Adesanya on social media.

Adesanya's chance at redemption comes against another unbeaten contender whose rise in the UFC has been even quicker. The supremely powerful Costa needed only five UFC bouts to earn a title shot, although the Brazilian was nearly 26 when he joined the promotion.

Costa and Adesanya have sparred online, but been polite when they meet in person, according to both fighters — yet they go right back to trash-talking each other when they part.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Brazil's Paulo Costa, right, will face Nigeria's Israel Adesanya for the middleweight title Saturday in the main event of UFC 253 in Abu Dhabi.

"He's insecure," Adesanya said of Costa. "That's why we're fighting each other. We get to fight. Someone that you've been barking at behind the fence, when you see them, what do you do? ... I've just said I don't like the guy, and I don't like the way he looks. It's never personal, but the difference is I get to settle it this weekend."

The main event is the most attractive fight by far on the card at UFC 253, the first of five consecutive UFC shows in its secure bubble in the Middle East.

Light heavyweight title challenger Dominick Reyes returns against Jan Blachowicz in the co-main event on a card also featuring crowd-pleasing flyweights Kai Kara-France and Brandon Royval, along with the 43rd professional fight of Diego Sanchez.



L.E. BASKOW, LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL/AP

UFC middleweight champion Israel Adesanya, right, kicks challenger Yoel Romero on March 7 during the second round of their UFC 248 fight at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas.

MLB

Dodgers get 40th victory

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES—Walker Buehler proved he and hisackle right index finger are playoff ready, Corey Seager homered and the Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Oakland Athletics 5-1 on Thursday night to earn their major league-leading 40th victory of the shortened 60-game season.

The Dodgers clinched home-field advantage throughout the playoffs that began next week.

"If I looked back a couple months ago, forty was a number we were kind of shooting for," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

Buehler allowed one hit in four innings, struck out six and walked one in his first career appearance against the A's.

"His fastball, he had it going," Oakland leadoff hitter Tommy La Stella said. "Throwing it for strikes, breaking the breaking ball."

Buehler returned earlier in the day after missing 12 games with a blister on his finger that landed him on the injured list twice in the last 4½ weeks.

"My stuff was probably as good as it has been this year," he said.

Buehler threw 65 pitches, enough to confirm his status as a starter in the NL wild-card playoff that the Dodgers will host. He had not pitched since Sept. 8 at Arizona, where he lasted just 2½ innings before leaving with finger issues.

He called former Dodgers pitcher Rich Hill, who has a history of blisters.

"He's a great resource. He's definitely helped," said Buehler, adding that Hill suggested treatment options and how to mentally handle the blister. "There's some weird parts about having a blister. Moving forward, it's not a problem."

Dylan Florio (3-0) got the victory, pitching one inning of relief and striking out one.

The A's struck out 16 times against six Dodgers pitchers. "There's really not a weak link in the chain," said La Stella, who whiffed twice. "But that's what you'd expect from a playoff team like they've been the last several years."

Seager went deep in the Dodgers' 10th home run of the season on the first pitch from Mike Piers leading off the third for a 2-0 lead. Will Smith snapped an 0-for-10 streak with a RBI single in the first.

Oakland's lone run came on Sean Murphy's homer in the eighth.

Pitts (6-3) gave up two runs and five hits in five innings.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Tampa Bay	37	20	.649	—
x-New York	32	25	.561	5
x-Toronto	27	32	.536	7
Baltimore	24	33	.421	13
Boston	22	38	.366	15
Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Minnesota	35	22	.614	—
x-Cleveland	34	23	.596	1
x-Cleveland	34	23	.579	2
Kansas City	24	33	.421	11
Detroit	22	33	.400	12
West Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Oakland	34	23	.607	—
x-Houston	29	28	.509	5½
x-Los Angeles	29	28	.509	5½
Seattle	25	31	.446	9
Los Angeles	19	38	.333	15½

National League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Atlanta	34	23	.596	—
Philadelphia	28	29	.491	6
New York	26	31	.456	8
Washington	23	34	.404	11
Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-St. Louis	28	26	.519	2½
Cincinnati	28	26	.519	2½
Milwaukee	27	29	.482	4½
Pittsburgh	23	34	.404	11
West Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Los Angeles	40	17	.702	—
San Francisco	38	20	.655	11½
Colorado	35	23	.607	14½
Arizona	22	34	.393	17½

Thursday's games
x-Houston (B) at Chicago White Sox 4
Cleveland 4, N.Y. Yankees 1
Baltimore (B) at Boston 1
Houston 12, Texas 4
Kansas City 8, Detroit 7
Pittsburgh 7, Chicago Cubs 0
Colorado 5, San Francisco 4, 11 innings
Miami 4, Atlanta 2
Baltimore (B) at Los Angeles 1
Los Angeles 5, Oakland 1
Friday's games
Detroit at Kansas City
Cincinnati at St. Louis
St. Louis at Milwaukee 2
N.Y. Mets at Arizona 2
Colorado at Washington 2
Houston (B) at Tampa Bay
Miami at N.Y. Yankees
Pittsburgh at Cleveland
San Diego at San Francisco 1
Chicago Cubs at Chicago White Sox
Cincinnati at Minnesota
L.A. Angels at L.A. Dodgers
Saturday's games
Oakland (TBD) at Seattle (Sheffield 4-3)
Baltimore (TBD) at Toronto (TBD)
Detroit (Boyd 2-7) at Kansas City (Hernandez 2-6)
Houston (TBD) at Texas (Gibson 2-6)
Seattle (Dunn 3-2) at Oakland (TBD)
Schwarber (4-2) at N.Y. Yankees (Garcia 2-2)
L.A. Angels (deGrom 4-2) at Washington (Sanchez 3-5)
Milwaukee (Woodruff 2-5) at St. Louis (Wainwright 5-2)
Philadelphia (Wheeler 4-1) at Tampa Bay (Wright 5-2)
Pittsburgh (Houck 2-0) at Atlanta (TBD)
Harris (Rogers 1-2) at Chicago White Sox (Dunning 2-0)
Cincinnati (TBD) at Minnesota (Pineda 2-0)
Pittsburgh (Mugrove 0-5) at Cleveland (Wright 5-2)
Colorado (Marquez 3-6) at Arizona (TBD)
L.A. Angels (Bundy 6-3) at L.A. Dodgers (TBD)
San Diego (TBD) at San Francisco (TBD)

Thursday

Pirates 7, Cubs 0

Chicago	W	L	Pct	GB
Rizzo lb	2	0	1.000	—
Contreras dh	2	0	1.000	—
Miner ph	2	0	1.000	—
Hayward r	2	0	1.000	—
Hamilton cf	1	0	1.000	—
Schwartz Jr. lf	1	0	1.000	—
Maybin cf-r	4	0	1.000	—
Baez ss	2	0	1.000	—
Botz b	3	0	1.000	—
Totals	28	0	1.000	—

Pirates 7, Cubs 0

Chicago	W	L	Pct	GB
Rizzo lb	2	0	1.000	—
Contreras dh	2	0	1.000	—
Miner ph	2	0	1.000	—
Hayward r	2	0	1.000	—
Hamilton cf	1	0	1.000	—
Schwartz Jr. lf	1	0	1.000	—
Maybin cf-r	4	0	1.000	—
Baez ss	2	0	1.000	—
Botz b	3	0	1.000	—
Totals	28	0	1.000	—

Pirates 7, Cubs 0

Chicago	W	L	Pct	GB
Rizzo lb	2	0	1.000	—
Contreras dh	2	0	1.000	—
Miner ph	2	0	1.000	—
Hayward r	2	0	1.000	—
Hamilton cf	1	0	1.000	—
Schwartz Jr. lf	1	0	1.000	—
Maybin cf-r	4	0	1.000	—
Baez ss	2	0	1.000	—
Botz b	3	0	1.000	—
Totals	28	0	1.000	—

Pirates 7, Cubs 0

Chicago	W	L	Pct	GB
Rizzo lb	2	0	1.000	—
Contreras dh	2	0	1.000	—
Miner ph	2	0	1.000	—
Hayward r	2	0	1.000	—
Hamilton cf	1	0	1.000	—
Schwartz Jr. lf	1	0	1.000	—
Maybin cf-r	4	0	1.000	—
Baez ss	2	0	1.000	—
Botz b	3	0	1.000	—
Totals	28	0	1.000	—

Pirates 7, Cubs 0

Chicago	W	L	Pct	GB
Rizzo lb	2	0	1.000	—
Contreras dh	2	0	1.000	—
Miner ph	2	0	1.000	—
Hayward r	2	0	1.000	—
Hamilton cf	1	0	1.000	—
Schwartz Jr. lf	1	0	1.000	—
Maybin cf-r	4	0	1.000	—
Baez ss	2	0	1.000	—
Botz b	3	0	1.000	—
Totals	28	0	1.000	—

Pirates 7, Cubs 0

Chicago	W	L	Pct	GB
Rizzo lb	2	0	1.000	—
Contreras dh	2	0	1.000	—
Miner ph	2	0	1.000	—
Hayward r	2	0	1.000	—
Hamilton cf	1	0	1.000	—
Schwartz Jr. lf	1	0	1.000	—
Maybin cf-r	4	0	1.000	—
Baez ss	2	0	1.000	—
Botz b	3	0	1.000	—
Totals	28	0	1.000	—

Wild-Card race

American League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Chicago	33	24	.576	—
x-Cleveland	34	23	.579	—
x-New York	32	25	.561	—
x-Toronto	30	27	.526	—
Houston	26	31	.452	4
San Francisco	26	31	.452	4
Seattle	25	31	.446	4½
National League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Diego	34	22	.607	—
St. Louis	28	26	.519	—
Cincinnati	29	28	.509	—
Philadelphia	28	28	.500	—
San Francisco	28	28	.500	—
Milwaukee	27	29	.482	1½
Los Angeles	25	31	.446	3
Colorado	25	31	.446	3

Wild-Card race

American League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Chicago	33	24	.576	—
x-Cleveland	34	23	.579	—
x-New York	32	25	.561	—
x-Toronto	30	27	.526	—
Houston	26	31	.452	4
San Francisco	26	31	.452	4
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Philadelphia	28	28	.500	—
San Francisco	28	28	.500	—
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National League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Diego	34	22	.607	—
St. Louis	28	26	.519	—
Cincinnati	29	28	.509	—
Philadelphia	28	28	.500	—
San Francisco	28	28	.500	—
Milwaukee	27	29	.482	1½
Los Angeles	25	31	.446	3
Colorado	25	31	.446	3

Wild-Card race

American League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Chicago	33	24	.576	—
x-Cleveland	34	23	.579	—
x-New York	32	25	.561	—
x-Toronto	30	27	.526	—
Houston	26	31	.452	4
San Francisco	26	31	.452	4
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National League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Diego	34	22	.607	—
St. Louis	28	26	.519	—
Cincinnati	29	28	.509	—
Philadelphia	28	28	.500	—
San Francisco	28	28	.500	—
Milwaukee	27	29	.482	1½
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Colorado	25	31	.446	3

Wild-Card race

American League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Chicago	33	24	.576	—
x-Cleveland	34	23	.579	—
x-New York	32	25	.561	—
x-Toronto	30	27	.526	—
Houston	26	31	.452	4
San Francisco	26	31	.452	4
Seattle	25	31	.446	4½
National League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Diego	34	22	.607	—
St. Louis	28	26	.519	—
Cincinnati	29	28	.509	—
Philadelphia	28	28	.500	—
San Francisco	28	28	.500	—
Milwaukee	27	29	.482	1½
Los Angeles	25	31	.446	3
Colorado	25	31	.446	3

Wild-Card race

American League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Chicago	33	24	.576	—
x-Cleveland	34	23	.579	—
x-New York	32	25	.561	—
x-Toronto	30	27	.526	—
Houston	26	31	.452	4
San Francisco	26	31	.452	4
Seattle	25	31	.446	4½
National League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Diego	34	22	.607	—
St. Louis	28	26	.519	—
Cincinnati	29	28	.509	—
Philadelphia	28	28	.500	—
San Francisco	28	28	.500	—
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Los Angeles	25	31	.446	3
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Wild-Card race

American League	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Chicago	33	24	.576	—
x-Cleveland	34	23	.579	—
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Cincinnati	29	28	.509	—
Philadelphia	28	28	.500	—
San Francisco	28	28	.500	—
Milwaukee	27	29	.482	1½
Los Angeles	25	31	.446	3
Colorado	25	31	.446	3

Wild-Card race

5	1	2	2	Bregman 3b	5	2	3
4	1	1	0	Tucker lf	4	0	0
3	2	3	1	Gurriel 1b	4	0	0
3	1	1	2	Toro ph-1b	1	0	0
3	0	1	1	Correa ss	4	1	1
4	2	3	1	Myfield ph-ss	0	1	0
4	0	2	0	Reddick rf	5	3	3
4	0	1	0	Garneau c	5	0	0
4	0	0	0	Totals	42	12	15
				Houston			
				Texas			
34	7	14	7	E—Garneau (3)			

MLB

Roundup

Blue Jays clinch 1st playoff spot since 2016

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Hyun Jin Ryu (5-2) pitched seven shutout innings and the Toronto Blue Jays clinched their first postseason spot since 2016, beating the Yankees 4-1 Thursday night and further damaging New York's chances of hosting a first-round playoff series.

New York lost for the fourth time in five games and remained two games behind the slumping White Sox for the fourth seed. Chicago lost 5-4 at Cleveland, its fifth consecutive defeat.

Toronto secured at least an AL wild-card spot and ensured its eighth trip overall to the postseason.

Blue Jays players embraced on the diamond at their temporary home of Sahlen Field in Buffalo after Rafael Dolis struck out Aaron Hicks to end it.

The Blue Jays trail the Yankees by two games for second place in the AL East. Both teams have three games remaining. Toronto hosts Baltimore in Buffalo while the Yankees host the Marlins.

Rookies 5, Giants 4: Raimel Tapia hit a go-ahead sacrifice fly in the 11th inning, and visiting Colorado rallied to keep San Francisco from gaining ground in the NL wild-card race.

The Giants (28-28), winners of three of their last five, dropped behind the idle Cincinnati for the first NL wild card. The Reds (29-28) visit Minnesota over the final



The Toronto Blue Jays' Vladimir Guerrero Jr. scores on a double by Alejandro Kirk as New York Yankees catcher Kyle Higashioka reaches to make a tag during the sixth inning Thursday night in Buffalo, N.Y. The Blue Jays won 4-1 to secure at least an AL wild-card spot.

weekend as the playoff-bound Padres come to San Francisco

Indians 5, White Sox 4: Jose Ramirez delivered a go-ahead, two-run double in the seventh inning as host Cleveland beat Chicago for a four-game sweep in a matchup of playoff-bound teams.

The victory pulled the Indians within one game of Chicago for the fourth seed and home-field advantage in the first round of the postseason. Idle Minnesota leads the White Sox by one game in the AL Central with three to play.

Cardinals 4, Brewers 2: Yadier Molina singled twice to reach

2,000 career hits and host St. Louis began a five-game series between playoff contenders by beating Milwaukee.

Rookie Dylan Carlson homered, doubled and drove in three runs as the Cardinals (28-26) kept their slim lead over Cincinnati (29-28) for second place in the NL Central.

Marlins 4, Braves 2: Jon Berti had three hits, including a two-run double, Pablo Lopez (6-4) allowed only two hits in five scoreless innings and visiting Miami beat Atlanta to boost its playoff hopes.

Miami snapped a four-game

losing streak. The Marlins (29-28) are competing for a wild-card spot as they try to reach the playoffs for the first time since winning the World Series in 2003.

Pirates 7, Cubs 0: Chad Kuhl pitched seven sharp innings and Colin Moran and Bryan Reynolds had home runs among their three hits each in host Pittsburgh's victory over slumping Chicago.

Kuhl (2-3) retired his first nine batters and had a no-hitter until Anthony Rizzo doubled with one out in the sixth inning.

Mets 3, Nationals 2: Robinson Chirinos homered and drove in

three runs, and New York beat host Washington to keep its flickering postseason hopes alive.

The Mets (26-31) moved within 2½ games of Miami (28-28) for second place in the NL East and within 2½ games of San Francisco (28-28) for the NL's second wild card.

Astros 12, Rangers 4: Alex Bregman's three extra-base hits included one of his team's four home runs, and visiting Houston trimmed its magic number to one for clinching the American League's last playoff spot.

George Springer and Jose Altuve also homered with runners on base, and like Bregman finished with three hits and three RBIs. Houston had a 10-0 lead against Lance Lynn (6-3) before its rookie starter Cristian Javier (5-2) gave up his only runs in the sixth.

Orioles 13, Red Sox 1: Jose Iglesias, Pat Valaika and Austin Hays homered to lead visiting Baltimore past Boston in a struggle for last place in the AL East.

Boston has clinched its worst winning percentage since the 1965 team lost 100 games.

Royals 8, Tigers 7: Salvador Perez hit a three-run home run, Maikel Franco hit a go-ahead homer in the sixth inning and host Kansas City beat Detroit.

Miguel Cabrera continued his hot streak with a two-run homer in the fifth to tie the game at 4. He has four home runs and 12 RBIs in the past four games.

Wil Myers, Padres expected to win much sooner when he arrived in '15

FROM BACK PAGE

Myers came over from Tampa Bay in a three-team trade that also involved the Washington Nationals. He is the only player left from that group of high-priced veterans that failed to deliver Preaker's win-now vision. However, the GM sent Shields to the Chicago White Sox for Tatis in a steal of a trade in July 2016 that highlighted San Diego's rebuild.

"In 2015 we had a good team here, a talented team with some names on it. At that time I didn't think it would be 2020 before I'd be talking about postseason," Myers said.

This is also the first season Myers has enjoyed the Padres having a winning record.

"Although there's been a lot of downs, it's kind of cool to be a player that's kind of gone through the entire thing," said Myers, who marveled earlier this season about how good it felt that the Padres were big, not sellers, approaching the trade deadline. "You go to see an entire rebuild process, the good and the bad times to it. Obviously the bad times happen, but when you're in those it makes you appreciate this more. Certain years were tougher than others, but you sit back and you see the entire plan come together and I think that makes it a little more gratifying."

Myers might have been moved by now if not for his struggles and an \$83 million,

six-year contract he received in January 2017, when the Padres declared him "the face of the franchise."

He was an All-Star in 2016 and then largely struggled through injuries and position changes the following three seasons. Last year, he had 18 homers and 53 RBIs in 155 games, with 168 strikeouts.

"Anybody having their worst season, it's tough," he said. "Those are the times that make you better. It makes you really reevaluate what you're doing. It makes you say, 'You know what, man? I don't have this figured out,' or I need to really drastically change some things so I look back at last year and I say, 'Well, if I don't have last year, who knows what happens this year.' I look at it as a blessing because it's one of those things that helps you respond to what's next and for me I feel like that's been the big thing for me."

Myers credited hitting coach Damien Easley with helping him regain his confidence.

"A lot of it has been me sticking with a single thing that's kind of kept me in line, not trying to look at a lot of video, or look at a lot of swing mechanics, or look at tendencies of pitchers," Myers said. "It's just been a lot of what makes me good."

Myers was part of the "Slam Diego" outburst in August, when the Padres became the first team in history to hit a grand slam in four consecutive games and then five in



GREGORY BULL/AP

Wil Myers, top, is congratulated by teammates after hitting a walk-off, three-run homer to defeat the Seattle Mariners on Aug. 27 in San Diego. Myers was an All-Star in 2016 but struggled with injuries and position changes the ensuing three seasons.

six games. He hit another slam, plus a solo shot, at home against Colorado on Sept. 8.

First baseman Eric Hosmer has known Myers since they were both in the Kansas City Royals' organization. Myers was traded to Tampa Bay prior to the 2013 season, when he was voted AL Rookie of the Year and helped the Rays reach the playoffs.

"It's been classic Wil," Hosmer said. "That's the guy I played with when he was 18, 19 years old. When you put him in a competitive environment with a lot on the line, that's when his talent shows the most. He can beat you in all aspects of the game. He's got legs, he can certainly hit, his de-

fense has been tremendous as well. It's great to see."

"I know Wil was a big trade piece in Kansas City so he didn't get to experience some of the stuff I experienced, but he's as hungry as ever to experience it on his own," said Hosmer, who helped the Royals win the 2015 World Series. "He's been a big part of this team. He's been quietly putting up an MVP-type season and it's been amazing to watch. The confidence, the leadership that he has now, it's been really fun to be a part of and it's been really fun to watch him do."

NBA PLAYOFFS/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Davis, James lift Lakers to 3-1 lead

LA puts Denver in deep hole, but Nuggets have twice come back from same deficit

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The Los Angeles Lakers are a victory away from returning to the NBA Finals — and only another comeback from 3-1 down by the Denver Nuggets can stop them.

Anthony Davis scored 34 points, LeBron James had 26 and the Lakers beat the Nuggets 114-108 on Thursday night in Game 4 of the Western Conference finals.

"We played great down the stretch, we played great overall," Davis said. "Still some things that we can fix if we want to put this thing away."

Davis got the Lakers off to a fast start with his scoring and James helped them finish it with his defense, forcing Jamal Murray into some late misses after the guard had kept the Nuggets in it with an array of high-difficulty baskets.

"I knew it was winning time and Jamal had it going," James said.

James added nine rebounds and eight assists, and the Lakers had 12 offensive rebounds for a whopping 25-6 advantage in second-chance points.

"This is the Western Conference finals, Game 4. If you can't help us on the defensive end, maybe you shouldn't be on the floor," Denver coach Michael Malone said. "We have to be able to lock in, finish with a rebound. We had too many empty possessions tonight."

Game 5 is Saturday night, when the Lakers can reach the NBA Finals for the first time in a decade. Davis said he expects to be fine for it after rolling his ankle in the fourth quarter.

The Nuggets will be facing elimination for the seventh time in the bubble. They were down 3-1 against Utah in the first round

Scoreboard

Playoffs	
CONFERENCE FINALS	
(Best-of-seven; x if necessary)	
Eastern Conference	
Miami 3, Boston 1	
Miami 117, Boston 114, OT	
Miami 106, Boston 101	
Boston 117, Miami 106	
Miami 112, Boston 109	
Friday: Game 5	
x-Sunday: Game 6 (AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. Monday CET; 8:30 a.m. Monday JKT)	
x-Tuesday: Game 7	
Western Conference	
L.A. Lakers 3, Denver 1	
L.A. Lakers 126, Denver 114	
L.A. Lakers 105, Denver 103	
Denver 114, L.A. Lakers 106	
L.A. Lakers 114, Denver 108	
Saturday: Game 5 (AFN-Sports, 3 a.m. Sunday CET; 10 a.m. Sunday JKT)	
x-Monday: Game 6	
x-Wednesday: Game 7	

Thursday Lakers 114, Nuggets 108

L.A. LAKERS — Davis 10-15 13-14 34, James 7-18 11-14 26, Howard 5-6 2-3 12, McDowell-Pope 5-12 0-13, Green 1-6 0-3, Kuzma 4-11 0-10, Ma-Morris 1-2 0-2, McGee 0-0 0-0, Caruso 1-4 0-3, Rondo 4-6 2-4 11. Totals 38-80 28-35 114.

DENVER — Grant 6-13 3-4 17, Millsap 1-3 2-5, Jokic 6-12 2-16, Harris 1-5 0-3, Murray 12-20 8-8 32, Craig 3-6 0-7, Dozier 0-0 0-0, Plumlee 1-2 0-3, Plumlee 1-2 1-3, Ma-Morris 4-7 4-12. Totals 39-77 20-32 108.

L.A. Lakers 37 23 27 27-114
Denver 30 25 29 24-108

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 10-30 (Caldwell-Pope 3-9, Kuzma 2-7, Caruso 1-2, Dozier 1-3, James 1-3, Green 1-4), Denver 10-28 (Porter Jr. 3-6, Jokic 2-3, Grant 2-6, Harris 1-2, Millsap 1-2, Craig 1-4, Ma-Morris 0-2, Murray 0-3). Fouled Out—L.A. Lakers 1 (Ma-Morris), Denver None. Rebounds—L.A. Lakers 41 (Howard 11), Denver 33 (Porter Jr. 8). Assists—L.A. Lakers 23 (Craig 8), Denver 22 (Murray 8). Total Fouls—L.A. Lakers 25, Denver 28.

and climbed out of the same hole against the Los Angeles Clippers in the West semifinals.

They couldn't come back in this game, getting within one point in the opening minute of the fourth quarter but constantly turned back from there by a key stop or rebound by the Lakers.

"We just had so many break-downs throughout the game,"



PHOTOS BY MARK J. TERRILL/AP

The Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James passes around the Denver Nuggets' Torrey Craig during the second half Thursday night in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. James had 26 points, nine rebounds and eight assists as the Lakers closed in on their first NBA Finals appearance in a decade with a 114-108 victory.

Murray said. "We've just got to be better."

The Lakers have 16 championships, one behind Boston for the most in history, but they haven't played for one since winning their most recent title in 2010.

The Lakers started Dwight Howard at center and he had 12 points and 11 rebounds, helping put Nikola Jokic into foul trouble.

Murray had 32 points and eight assists, but Jokic finished with just 16 points and seven rebounds.

Davis scored 27 points in Game 3 but the 6-foot-10 forward acknowledged that his two-rebound performance was "unacceptable." He came out much more aggressively Thursday after the Lakers played from behind much of the last game.

With an array of short jumpers, Davis made his first six shots before anyone else on the Lakers made a basket. Then Howard scored on consecutive follow shots before James followed with his first two field goals.

Murray kept the Lakers from getting too far away with a 7-for-8 start. He followed his acrobatic



Anthony Davis, who led the Lakers with 34 points, rolled his ankle in the fourth quarter but expects to be ready for Game 5.

layup around James with 2½ minutes remaining in the half and two free throws that cut it to four, before the Lakers took a 60-55 edge to the locker room.

The Nuggets shot 59% in the first half but the Lakers had an 18-2 advantage in second-chance points.

The Lakers seemed to be taking control when Rajon Rondo and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope combined for a flurry that pushed the lead to 11 with under 4 minutes remaining in the third, but Michael Porter Jr. hit two three-pointers late in the period that cut it to 87-84 going to the fourth.

Pac-12 football to start Nov. 6; Mountain West targets Oct. 24

By RALPH D. RUSSO

Associated Press

The Pac-12 is set to kick off a seven-game football season Nov. 6 after it followed the Big Ten in overturning an August decision to punt on playing in the fall because of concerns about COVID-19.

With the conference having secured daily COVID-19 testing for its athletes and been given the green light from state and local health officials, the Pac-12 CEO Group voted unanimously Thursday to lift a Jan. 1 moratorium on athletic competition.

"The discussion among the presidents and chancellors was

RUNNING A REVERSE

Major college football, in peril six weeks ago, has a chance to be almost whole by November. The Big Ten last week announced it would kick off the weekend of Oct. 24. The Pac-12 and Mountain West jumped back in Thursday, and the Mid-American Conference, the first FBS league to postpone, is reconsidering.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

largely about the benefits as well as the cons of starting in the fall versus starting in January," Uni-

versity of Oregon President Michael Schill said. "The consensus opinion was the benefits of starting in the fall were much greater than the benefits of starting in the ... winter."

"Things changed from the first time we addressed this issue."

Three hours after the Pac-12 announced its return, the Mountain West did the same, using a tweet to say it is targeting an Oct. 24 start to an eight-game season.

The Pac-12's men's and women's basketball seasons can start Nov. 25, in line with the NCAA's recently announced opening date. The football championship game is set for Dec. 18, putting

the conference in play for the College Football Playoff and a New Year's Six Bowl selection — and the multimillion dollar payouts that come with them.

The remaining FBS holdout is the first league to postpone. And that might not be for much longer. The Mid-American Conference university presidents were scheduled to meet Friday to reconsider fall football.

The Southeastern Conference begins play this weekend, joining the Big 12, Atlantic Coast Conference and three others that have been up and running since Labor Day weekend.

The season is ongoing but it has

been anything but normal. There have been 21 games postponed or canceled since Aug. 26 because of teams battling various levels of COVID-19-related issues.

This week, four games scheduled to be played Saturday have been called off, including Notre Dame at Wake Forest because of a virus outbreak among Fighting Irish players.

The turning point for the return of sports in the Pac-12 came Sept. 3 when it entered an agreement with diagnostic testing company Quidel that will give each school the capacity to conduct daily antigen tests on their athletes.

NFL

Scoreboard

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	Pf	PA
Buffalo	2	0	0	1.000	58	45
New England	1	1	0	.500	51	46
Miami	1	2	0	.333	70	65
N.Y. Jets	0	2	0	.000	30	58
South						
Tennessee	2	0	0	1.000	49	44
Indianapolis	1	1	0	.500	48	38
Jacksonville	1	2	0	.333	70	84
Houston	0	2	0	.000	36	67
North						
Baltimore	2	0	0	1.000	71	22
Pittsburgh	2	0	0	1.000	52	37
Cleveland	1	1	0	.500	41	68
Cincinnati	0	2	0	.000	43	51
West						
Kansas City	2	0	0	1.000	57	40
Las Vegas	2	0	0	1.000	58	54
L.A. Chargers	1	1	0	.500	36	36
Denver	0	2	0	.000	35	42

National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	Pf	PA
Dallas	1	1	0	.500	57	59
Washington	1	1	0	.500	42	47
N.Y. Giants	0	2	0	.000	29	43
Philadelphia	0	2	0	.000	36	64
South						
New Orleans	1	1	0	.500	58	57
Tampa Bay	1	1	0	.500	54	51
Atlanta	0	2	0	.000	64	78
Carolina	0	2	0	.000	47	65
North						
Chicago	2	0	0	1.000	44	36
Green Bay	2	0	0	1.000	85	65
Detroit	0	2	0	.000	44	69
Minnesota	0	2	0	.000	45	71
West						
Arizona	2	0	0	1.000	59	35
L.A. Rams	2	0	0	1.000	57	36
Seattle	2	0	0	1.000	73	55
San Francisco	1	1	0	.500	51	37

Thursday's game

Miami 31, Jacksonville 13

Sunday's games

Houston at Pittsburgh
Tennessee at Minnesota
Cincinnati at Philadelphia
Chicago at Atlanta
Washington at Cleveland
Las Vegas at New England
L.A. Rams at Buffalo
San Francisco at N.Y. Giants
N.Y. Jets at Indianapolis
Carolina at L.A. Chargers
Tampa Bay at Denver
Detroit at Arizona
Dallas at Seattle
Green Bay at New Orleans
Kansas City at Baltimore

Monday's game

Kansas City at Baltimore

Thursday, Oct. 1

Denver at N.Y. Jets

Sunday, Oct. 4

L.A. Chargers at Tampa Bay
Cleveland at Dallas
Baltimore at Washington
Pittsburgh at Tennessee
Arizona at Carolina
New Orleans at Detroit
Jacksonville at Cincinnati
Minnesota at Houston
Seattle at Miami
Indianapolis at Chicago
N.Y. Giants at L.A. Rams
Buffalo at Las Vegas
New England at Kansas City
Philadelphia at San Francisco

Monday, Oct. 5

Atlanta at Green Bay

Thursday

Dolphins 31, Jaguars 13

Miami 14 7 7 3-31
Jacksonville 0 7 0 6-13

First quarter

Mia—Williams 3 pass from Fitzpatrick (Sanders kick), 8:09.
Mia—Howard 1 run (Sanders kick), 2:37.

Second quarter

Jac—J.Robinson 11 run (Wright kick), 13:04.
Mia—Gesicki 15 pass from Fitzpatrick (Sanders kick), 5:58.

Third quarter

Mia—Fitzpatrick 1 run (Sanders kick), 2:01.

Fourth quarter

Jac—J.Robinson 1 run (Kick failed), 9:03.
Mia—FG Sanders 30, 3:49.
A—16:56.

First downs 23 24
Total Net Yards 254 218
Rushing Yards 36 138
Passing 156 246
Punt Returns 2-28 1-8
Kickoff Returns 2-31 1-24
Interceptions Ret. 1-1 0-0
Fumbles-Lost 18-0 30-45
Sacked-Yards Lost 1-4 4-29
Punt-Yards 4-41.0 3-52.3
Fumbles-Lost 0-0 1-1
Penalties-Yards 6-51 8-63
Time of Possession 32:22 29:38

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Touchdowns—Mia 2-66, Fitzpatrick 7-38, Grant 1-29, Breida 3-4, 1-Howard 3-1. **Jacksonville**—J.Robinson 6-83, Thompson 3-29, Eflert 2-11, Westbrook 1-4, Johnson 1-3.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.



Miami Dolphins wide receiver Preston Williams, left, catches a pass in the end zone for a touchdown as Jaguars strong safety Josh Jones tries to defend during the first half of Thursday's game in Jacksonville, Fla.

PHOTOS BY PHILAN M. EBENHACK / AP

Different team, same result

This time with Dolphins, Fitzpatrick dominates Jags again

BY MARK LONG
Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.—Ryan Fitzpatrick handles the Jacksonville Jaguars as well as anyone in the NFL.

It doesn't matter which uniform the journeyman quarterback is wearing, either. Fitzpatrick accounted for three touchdowns and led Miami to a 31-13 victory Thursday night, becoming the first NFL quarterback to notch six wins over the same opponent with six teams. "Fitz is out of his mind," tight end Mike Gesicki said. "His (37) and playing like he's 23. You see the fun he has. After I scored, we came off the field chest bumping and screaming. It's so much fun to play with him."

The lopsided outcome also gave Miami (1-2) its first double-digit victory in 39 games, ending the longest drought in the league. It was the first time the Dolphins have won a game by more than eight points since Dec. 3, 2017, a 35-9 victory over Denver.

Fitzpatrick completed his first 12 passes — a career high — as Miami scored touchdowns on its first three drives for the first time since 2011. He ended the night celebrating another victory over the Jaguars (1-2).

"It's why I still play," Fitzpatrick said. "I enjoy playing, especially when you're having success. I feel like the luckiest guy in the world sometimes get-



Dolphins quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick became the first NFL quarterback to notch six wins over the same opponent with six teams. He completed 18 of 20 passes for 160 yards and two TDs.

ting to go outside and play football with my friends."

He improved to 6-2 as a starter against Jacksonville, his wins coming with Cincinnati (2008), Buffalo (2012), Tennessee (2013), Houston (2014), the New York Jets (2015) and now Miami.

Fitzpatrick also ran for 39 yards and a score, his 37-year-old legs looking as fresh as any in Miami's backfield.

He completed 18 of 20 passes — the last one to himself — for 160 yards and two touchdowns in his latest successful outing against the Jags, who made countless mistakes while failing to consistently move the chains and get off

fourth touchdown of the night.

"I let this offense down," Conley said. "Rough night."

■ Minschew audibled to a pitch to the short side of the field on a third-and-5 play. He was sacked on the next play, ending a shot at making the game close at halftime.

■ Left tackle Cam Robinson was disqualified for making contact with an official following Minschew's fumble.

■ Rookie cornerback CJ Henderson was on the wrong end of one of four pass interference calls against Jacksonville. He also failed to touch receiver Jakeem Grant down after Grant made a diving catch. Grant jumped up and gained an extra 10 yards.

Adding injury to insult, the Jaguars may have lost linebacker Leon Jacobs for the season. Jacobs was carted off the field on the opening drive with a right knee injury.

Bright spot

Rookie running back James Robinson was one of Jacksonville's few bright spots. He ran 11 times for 46 yards and two touchdowns and had six receptions for 83 yards.

Social justice

Both teams remained in their locker room for the national anthem, continuing their push for social and racial justice.

SPORTS

MLB

THE WIL TO WIN

Outfielder Myers enjoying bounce-back season with playoff-bound Padres

BY BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Wil Myers is back.

While Fernando Tatis Jr. and Manny Machado have grabbed most of the attention for the playoff-bound Padres, Myers' comeback performance also has been instrumental in returning San Diego to postseason play for the first time since 2006.

Myers' six-year sojourn with the Padres has been twisted and often dismal, at the plate and as a player on a team that lost with regularity. The longest-tenured Padres player, Myers has bounced back from his worst season and is putting up impressive numbers in the pandemic-shortened season.

The outfielder is hitting .291 with 14 homers and 38 RBIs in 52 games.

Fittingly, Myers hit a big three-run home run in the Padres' playoff-clinching, 11-inning victory against the Seattle Mariners on Sunday.

"Throughout my entire career I've hit some home runs, but this one the other day was pretty big," he said. "To be able to have a hit that helped push us to get there was really cool."

In January 2015, Myers sat on a stage at Petco Park for an introductory news conference with Justin Upton, Derek Norris and Will Middlebrooks, part of general manager A.J. Preller's offseason shopping spree that also included Matt Kemp and James Shields.

SEE WIL
ON PAGE 21

Wil Myers, shown celebrating a walk-off homer on Aug. 27, has bounced back from his worst season with a .291 average, 14 homers and 38 RBIs in this pandemic-shortened season.

GREGORY BULL/AP

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Pac-12, Mountain West decide to play fall season » College football, Page 22