LAKE CHARLES, La. — The destructive storm surge has receded, and the cleanup has begun from Hurricane Laura, but officials along this shattered stretch of Louisiana coast are warning returning residents they will face weeks without power or water amid the hot, stifling days of late summer.

Weeks without power, water ahead as cleanup underway

By Stacey Plaisance and Melinda Deslatte
Associated Press

The relationship has been rocky at times in large part because of periodic attacks by Iran-backed militia groups that are not fully controlled by the Iraqi government.

American troops are in Iraq to train and advise Iraqi security forces battling the Islamic State, but the relationship has been rocky at times in large part because of periodic attacks by Iran-backed militia groups that are not fully controlled by the Iraqi government.

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Trump met last week at the White House with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi.

“We look forward to the day when we don’t have to be there,” Trump said then. “We were there and now we’re getting out. We’ll be leaving shortly and the relationship is very good. We’re making very big oil deals. Our oil

By Robert Burns
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States plans to reduce its military force in Iraq from the current 5,200 to about 3,500 by November, U.S. officials said Friday. The cut would be in line with President Donald Trump’s repeated call to bring troops home and his reelection campaign pledge to end what he calls “endless wars.”

The plan to shrink the U.S. force in Iraq was first reported by the Wall Street Journal. Officials who confirmed the plan spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a matter not yet publicly announced.

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S&P on rise for 5th straight week

The Associated Press

More gains for stocks Friday gave the S&P 500 its fifth straight winning week. That’s the longest weekly winning streak for the benchmark index since December, before the coronavirus pandemic swept the world and sent economies tumbling into recession.

The S&P 500 rose 0.7%, bringing its weekly gain to 3.3%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rallied 161.60, or 0.6%, to 28,653.87. The Nasdaq composite climbed 70.30, or 0.6%, to 11,695.61.

For the week:
- The S&P 500 is up 110.85 points, or 3.3%.
- The Dow is up 723.46, or 0.7%.
- The Nasdaq is up 383.83 points, or 3.4%.
- The Russell 2000 is up 25.87 points, or 1.7%.

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.
New Air Force policy allows troops to ask to be near their kids

**By ROSE L. THAYER**
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — A noncommissioned officer became the first member of the Air Force to receive a duty assignment based on a new policy to consider child-custody agreements.

Master Sgt. William Rotroff, an F-35 integrated section chief with the 756th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., got approval for the move to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., to be near his son, Chevvy, less than 24 hours after he submitted the paperwork, according to a news release from the Air Force Personnel Center.

“This is everything for my son to have both of his parents,” Rotroff said during a phone call from Arizona, where he and his son had enjoyed going camping, fishing and riding by dirt bike. He hasn’t seen his son in more than four months and is finalizing his move in the next few weeks.

The new policy went into effect Aug. 17 and gives parents the ability to defer an assignment or be stationed near their children with a court-ordered child-custody decree. Assignment authorities can now consider requests for an assignment or deferment to a location near their children, even if the co-parents are not married.

Rotroff said he found himself in a unique situation when orders for an unaccompanied overseas assignment beginning in May were delayed to July, then October and then canceled unexpectedly. He’d already helped relocate his ex-wife and their 4-year-old son from Luke to Arizona, where she would have a stronger support system in his absence.

“I push through here, even with the situation at hand, but it does affect you,” he said of missing Chevvy. “Especially the longer the time lapses. You feel like you’re not coming home to my child and spend time with him, educate him, have fun with him. Memories are everything and they don’t last forever.”

He submitted his paperwork the day after the policy went into effect, expecting a 30-day turn-around. The next day his commander, Maj. Joseph Langan, delivered the good news.

“One of the greatest parts about being a squadron commander is that I have the ability and authority to fix many problems for my Airmen relatively quickly,” Langan said in a statement. “Sometimes the problems are messy and have complex solutions, but this was one of the easiest and most satisfying wins I’ve had during my time in command.”

Nearly two weeks into effect, 70 airmen have submitted paper work to use to request an assignment or deferment under the new policy, said Traci Howells, spokeswoman for the Air Force Personnel Center. An approval process can take two to three weeks and the program wasn’t immediately available.

She said they’ve promoted the new policy to airmen through memorandums and the online personnel management system.

“I’ve been asked a lot of questions about the program since people know I got the assignment,” said Rotroff, who’d been at Luke for more than six years and was eligible to move stations. “I recommend they read the guidelines, understand them and try to evaluate the options and what you can do. It definitely doesn’t hurt to ask questions.”

Assignment teams received training on the new policy before its implementation to ease the process and provide quick results, said Cristi Bowes, who leads military assignment policy and procedures at the Air Force Personnel Center.

“This program truly shows how the Air Force cares for their airmen and families. It provides an opportunity for airmen to continue serving... and not have to choose between their career and their children.”

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**By CAITLIN M. KENNEY**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON— Two special operations soldiers were killed Thursday and three others injured in a helicopter crash during routine training off the California coast, officials said Friday.

On Saturday, the Army identified the dead soldiers as Staff Sgt. Vincent P. Marketta, 33, of Brick, N.J., and Sgt. Tyler M. Shelton, 22, of San Bernardino, Calif.

An element of U.S. Army Special Operations Command was conducting “targeting” training in the vicinity of Coronado, Calif., when the “aircraft incident” occurred, SOCOM spokesperson said in a statement. The area has been secured and an investigation into the incident is underway.

The helicopter crashed into a Black hawk and the soldiers killed and injured were from the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, The San Diego Union-Tribune reported, citing a Defense Department official. The 160th SOAR is headquartered out of Fort Campbell, Ky., and provides rotary wing support to special operations forces.

The defense official also told The San Diego Union-Tribune their children.”

An MH-60M Blackhawk flown by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment in 2019.

**Pull: Pompeo says US will help with shift to Iraqi police**

FROM FRONT PAGE

companies are making massive deals. ... We’re going to be leaving and hopefully, we’re going to be leaving a country that can defend itself.”

Last month, the top U.S. general for the Middle East said both U.S. and Iran would keep a smaller but enduring presence in the country. Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, commander of U.S. Central Command, said he believes the Iraqis welcome U.S. and coalition troops, especially in the ongoing fight to keep ISIS fighters from taking hold of the country again.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said as recently as this month that the administration intends to get U.S. forces in Iraq to the lowest possible level as quickly as possible, but he has not cited specific numbers.

Pompeo said after meeting last week with Iraq’s foreign minister that Washington was committed to helping Iraq regain and maintain security. Armed groups are not under the full control of the Iraqi prime minister, Pompeo said, adding that those groups should be replaced by local police as soon as possible and that the U.S. would help.

Tensions spiked between the U.S. and Iraq in January after a U.S. drone strike near the Baghdad airport killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. Angry Iraqi lawmakers, spurned on by Shiite political factions, passed a nonbinding resolution to oust all U.S.-led coalition forces from the country.

In response to the Soleimani killing, Iran on Jan. 8 launched a ballistic missile attack on an Iraqi air base in Iraq, which resulted in traumatic brain injuries to more than 100 American troops. Two months later, U.S. fighters struck five sites in retaliation, targeting Iranian-backed Shiite militia members believed responsible for the January rocket attack.

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Whitney Hughes/U.S. Army

An MH-60M Blackhawk flown by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment in 2019.
Man arrested in triple homicide near Fort Hood

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas – A 21-year-old man was arrested and charged with murder in a triple homicide in Killeen that left an Army veteran, a Fort Hood soldier and his pregnant girlfriend dead, local police said Friday.

Delmarcuez Liam Morrow was arrested at about 6 a.m. Friday in Newton, Mass., by officers with the U.S. Marshals Gulf Coast Regional Fugitive Task Force without incident, according to the Killeen Police Department.

Morrow was charged with the capital murder of multiple persons for the March 14 shooting that killed Army Spc. Vanessa Guillen at Fort Hood, Texas, by another soldier whom the family said was the military’s reconciliation with sex crimes across the force.

The Government Accountability Office of Special Investigation, wrote in a letter to Wilken. “OSI stands ready to listen to victims and survivors, provide them a voice no matter how long ago their sexual assault occurred, and to guarantee their opportunity to receive support.”

Wilken, 49, served in the Air Force between 1994 and 1998. She is the chairwoman of the AM-VETS National Women Veterans Committee and testified before a House Veterans Affairs Committee subpanel in 2013 about her attack, which led to two surgeries and a medical discharge. She said she has a 90% service-connected disability rating from the VA, 50% of which is from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the attack.

Bullard also said investigators were able to eventually retrieve the records of Wilken’s case, after investigators initially told her that there were no records.

Wilken said there are situations when the military should reach out to survivors, especially as the military reconciles with sex crimes across the force.

The Defense Department’s fiscal year 2019 report on sexual assault in the military said there were 7,825 sexual assault reports involving service members as victims or subjects, a 3% increase compared to 2018.

Wilken said the first contact with an agitated victim should be via phone or a letter. Bullard wrote in his letter that OSI is determining ways to make contact with a victim that are “the least intrusive,” and more informed and supportive if in-person contact is the only avenue.

Wilken said there was nothing to be done to revisit the case since her attacker was out of the military. He received an other-than-honorable discharge after an Article 32 hearing and served no time in jail.

On July 9, Wilken tweeted a news story about the killing of Army Spc. Vanessa Guillen at Fort Hood, Texas, by another soldier and how her death spurred women across the military to share their stories of rape, sexual assault and harassment.

“#IamVanessaGuillen. They warned me to tell! I told & expected justice. I was so young & dumb. The prosecutor said to you, but the rape wasn’t violent enough for him to get any real jail time.” Government Property,” Wilken tweeted.

The Air Force Office of Special Investigations monitors social media for anecdotes of potential victims of sexual crimes, and investigators spotted Wilken’s tweet, which led to them showing up at her door.

OSI has identified more than a dozen allegations of sexual assault via social media, according to Linda Card, an OSI spokeswoman. However, the scope of the military’s social media monitoring remains unclear as Card said she could not discuss tactics and procedures.

As the advent of social media platforms, OSI has recognized that both perpetrators of crime and victims of crime can voice their experiences on an online forum, Card said. “As a law enforcement organization, OSI has always paid attention to public spaces wherein our force and DoD community may seek to report wrongdoing or crime affecting our force. Social media represents one such public space.”

By Steven Beynon
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON – An Air Force general has issued an apology to a veteran after she raised concerns about how military investigators handled reexamining her 20-year-old rape case.

Lisa Wilken, a former airman and veteran, told two military investigators showed up at her Indiana home unannounced three weeks ago and Wilken said that she was monitoring social media.

It’s possible other women could be uncomfortable telling their stories knowing the Defense Department is in the audience, Wilken said.

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Top general: No role for military in election

WASHINGTON — The U.S. armed forces will have no role in carrying out the election process or resolving a disputed vote, the top U.S. military officer has told Congress.

The comments from Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, underscore the extraordinary political environment in America, where the president has declared without evidence that the election is fraudulent and has suggested he might not accept the election results if he loses. Milley’s comments were first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

Trump’s repeated complaints questioning the election’s validity have triggered unprecedented worries about the potential for chaos surrounding the election results. Some have speculated that the military might be called upon to get involved, either by Trump trying to use it to help him change the election’s outcome or to help with election-related protests or security concerns. Democratic challenger Joe Biden has suggested, to remove Trump from the White House if he refuses to accept defeat.

The military has adamantly sought to tamp down that speculation and is zealously protective of its historically apolitical nature.

“I believe deeply in the principle of an apolitical U.S. military,” Milley said in written responses to several questions posed by two Democratic members of the House Armed Services Committee. “In the event of a dispute over some aspect of the elections, by law U.S. courts and the U.S. Congress are required to resolve any disputes, not the U.S. military. I foresee no role for the U.S. armed forces in this process.”

Milley’s tone reflects long-standing views of military leaders who insist that the nation’s military stays out of politics and that troops are sworn to protect the Constitution, not favor one political party.

But the two Congress members, Reps. Elissa Slotkin of Michigan and Mikie Sherrill of New Jersey, said Friday that Trump’s recent comments and his efforts to use the military’s role in the peaceful transition of power is to stay out.”

Faced with polls showing he is trailing Biden, Trump last month said it was too early to guarantee he’d accept the election results.

“I have to see. Look ... I have to see,” Trump said on “Fox News Sunday.” “No, I’m not going to just say yes. I’m not going to say no.” The Biden campaign at the time responded that “the United States government is perfectly capable of escorting trespassers out of the White House.”

Trump later suggested that the election should be postponed, since the coronavirus pandemic has made it likely it could take days or weeks to count mail-in ballots. But that idea was immediately slapped down, including by top congressional Republicans, who said the election date can only be changed by Congress.

Milley, known to be a student of military history and a military audience, “we must hold dear the principles that are deeply rooted in the very essence of our democracy and our ability to run free and fair elections.”

The attorney general and other Cabinet members should be asked similar questions, she said.

The speculation about the military getting drawn into the election is fueled by Trump’s inclination to use the military as partisan props. He raised alarms — and met resistance from the Pentagon — when he threatened to use the Insurrection Act to use troops for law enforcement during the protests after George Floyd’s death.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper publicly said he opposed such a move — a stand that enraged Trump and nearly cost Esper his job.

The questions were also sent last month to Esper, and the answers were due Thursday. Esper is traveling in Asia this week, and Slotkin said he has not yet responded.

Slotkin is a former CIA analyst and senior Pentagon policy adviser and Sherrill served in the Navy for about 10 years.

This is the second time in recent months that Milley has made a public stand against military involvement in politics. In June he used a speech at the National Defense University to express regret for walking with Trump through Lafayette Square in what turned out to be a photo op during protests after the death of George Floyd.

He said photos of him there “sparked a national debate about the role of the military in civil society.” And he told the military audience, “we must hold dear the principles of an apolitical military that is so deeply rooted in the very essence of our republic.”

Defense secretary’s visit to tiny Palau highlights US-China competition

WASHINGTON — No nation is too small or too distant to disturb the United States. Washington, it seems, to be excluded from the Trump administration’s campaign to counter China’s efforts to supplant America as the dominant Pacific power.

Evidence of this is Defense Secretary Mark Esper’s decision to fly nearly halfway around the world in a Pacific archipelago with barely 20,000 people southeast of the Philippines.

There is no suggestion of a direct China threat to Palau. Instead the island nation is an example of the sometimes-obscure battleground over which China and United States are pursuing a “great power” competition for global influence in an era of a more inward-looking Washington and an increasingly assertive and ambitious China. The power struggle is intensifying on multiple fronts and is seen by some as an emerging “cold war” akin to the mostly non-shooting conflict that played out between the United States and the Soviet Union until the collapse of Soviet communism in 1991.

In defiance of Beijing, tiny pro-American Palau is one of only 15 states with official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the self-governing island that China claims as its own territory.

“We are concerned about China continuing to try to flip countries that recognize Taiwan today to establish diplomatic relations with China instead,” said Heino Klink, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia. “That destabilizing, quite frankly.”

The United States made that switch itself when it recognized Beijing as the sole legal government of China in 1979, although Washington maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan and sells arms to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act.

More broadly, Klink said in an interview with The Associated Press that the US is working to reinforce the U.S. commitment to a long-term relationship with Palau.

“A little country, maybe, but they punch above their weight when it comes to enrollment rates so he can spend several hours in Palau, a Pacific archipelago with barely 20,000 people southeast of the Philippines.

The Palau Capital building is seen in Melekeok, Palau, in 2009. Defense Secretary Mark Esper plans to fly nearly halfway around the world this week to tiny Palau, which no Pentagon chief has ever visited.

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**VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUPT**

**FDA, CDC credibility at risk after week of gaffes**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The credibility of two of the nation’s leading public health agencies was under fire this week after controversial decisions by agency experts and the FDA’s former head of the COVID-19 task force, according to former agency officials familiar with the matter.

On Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention quietly updated its guidelines to suggest fewer Americans need to be tested for coronavirus, sparking outrage from scientists. The change was the second in less than a month and came just days after the FDA approved emergency use authorization for a new drug, remdesivir, that could be a treatment for COVID-19.

The moves came less than two weeks after the White House tapped Emily Miller for the role. Miller previously worked as a staffer for Sen. Ted Cruz’s reelection campaign.

“People are really concerned about whether the administration is putting public health first,” said Louis Uatter, a former CDC official involved in the botched coronavirus pandemic response.

**Alabama**

MONTGOMERY — The University of Alabama announced Friday that an additional 481 students have tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total to more than 1,000 infections since students returned to campus for the fall.

The university system said no students are hospitalized.

“We are closely monitoring our data daily, and we will continue to add new cases and monitor the data,” said UA System Chancellor Finis St. John in a statement.

The university system said no students are hospitalized.

**California**

SACRAMENTO — With the hope of preventing another virus surge, California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a new process for reopening businesses that’s more gradual than the first attempt that eventually led him to close many businesses soon after they reopened.

“Simple, slow,” is how the Democratic governor described the new rules, which take effect Monday.

**Arizona**

ELOY — Immigration and Customs Enforcement has reported 233 more confirmed cases of COVID-19 at one of its facilities in Arizona.

The infections are at the La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy, which has so far seen a total of 356 cases. No other facility handled even close to as many cases as La Palma did on Friday, with most detention centers seeing single-digit increases.

It’s unclear how many people are detained at La Palma, but overall there are more than 21,000 people being held in ICE custody on civil immigration violations.

**Michigan**

LANSSING — Michigan on Friday crossed the threshold of 100,000 cases of the coronavirus confirmed since March.

Deaths related to COVID-19 reached 6,446 after six more were recorded, the state health department said.

**Pennsylvania**

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania state utility regulators have effectively extended a moratorium preventing utilities from terminating service to non-paying customers for three more weeks while the state fights the spread of the coronavirus.

The four-member panel of two Democrats and two Republicans postponed a vote on Thursday’s agenda until Sept. 17, after deadlocking twice on motions to lift the moratorium over the summer.

The Public Utility Commission slapped a moratorium on shutdown orders to help stop the spread of the virus.

In letters to the commission, Wolf, Attorney General Josh Shapiro, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and consumer advocates called on the commission to keep the moratorium in place, warning that people are still being hit hard economically by the fallout from the virus.

One theme of their comments is that the commission needs to construct a comprehensive plan to protect consumers when the moratorium does lift.

“If the commission insists on lifting its moratorium, then at a minimum I ask it to require utilities to offer customers some options of financial relief, such as late fee waivers, rate reductions, flexible payment arrangements, and/or debt forgiveness,” Shapiro wrote.

**Florida**

MIAMI — Two South Florida men used fake and stolen identities to steal over $3 million in coronavirus relief funds, authorities said.

Jean Fleuridor, 41, of Weston, and Hasan Brown, 44, of Miami, made separate appearances in Miami federal court on bank fraud conspiracy charges, according to court records.

According to a criminal complaint, Fleuridor, Brown and their co-conspirators began a scheme in 2017 to defraud a San Antonio, Texas, bank using about 700 fake identities, in addition to stolen identities, to create bank accounts and sell companies.

From April to July this year, members of the group began using those fake identities and companies to fraudulently apply for federal loans meant to help small businesses financially survive the COVID-19 pandemic, prosecutors said.

**James Gardner, 77, goes home after battling COVID-19 for a month at Jackson South Medical Center on Thursday in Miami. His family, including his adopted son Shaquelle Ross, 7, arrived to take him home.**

AL DIAZ, MIAMI HERALD-AP
Chadwick Boseman dies of colon cancer at 43

By Ryan Pearson Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Chadwick Boseman, who played Black American icons Jackie Robinson and James Brown with searing intensity before inspiring audiences worldwide as the regal Black Panther in Marvel’s blockbuster movie franchise, died Friday of cancer. He was 43.

Boseman died at his home in the Los Angeles area with his wife and family by his side, his publicist Nicki Floravante told The Associated Press.

Boseman was diagnosed with colon cancer four years ago, his family said in a statement.

“T’Challa character was first introduced to the blockbuster Marvel movies in 2016’s “Captain America: Civil War,” and his “Wakanda Forever” salute reverberated around the world after the release of “Black Panther” two years ago.

“I don’t think the world was ready for a ‘Black Panther’ movie before this moment. Socially and politically, it wasn’t ready for it,” he told AP at the time.

The film’s vision of Afrofuturism and the technologically advanced civilization of Wakanda resonated with audiences, some of whom were African attire to showings and helped propel “Black Panther” to more than $1.3 billion in global box office. It is the only Marvel Studios film to receive a best picture Oscar nomination.

At the 2019 Screen Actors Guild Award, “Black Panther” won best ensemble, electrifying the audience. Boseman delivered a rousing acceptance speech that mentioned his son.

Acting, in his opinion, was the honor of his career to bring King T’Challa to life in Black Panther.”

Boseman had not spoken publicly about his diagnosis. He is survived by his wife and a parent and had no children, Floravante said.

Born in South Carolina, Boseman graduated from Howard University and had small roles in television before his first star turn in 2013. His striking portrayal of the stoic baseball star Robinson opposite Harrison Ford in 2013’s “42” in Hollywood and made him a star.

A year later, he wowed audiences as Brown in the biopic “Get on Up.”

Boseman died on a day that Major League Baseball was celebrating Jackie Robinson day. “His transcendent performance in ‘42’ will stand the test of time and serve as a powerful vehicle to tell Jackie’s story to audiences for generations to come,” the league wrote in a tweet.

Evans called Boseman “a true giant to me and everyone in Hollywood titans, fans and politicians. Viola Davis, who acted alongside Boseman in “Get On Up” and an upcoming August Wilson adaptation, tweeted: “Chadwick....no words to express my devastation of losing you. Your talent, your spirit, your heart, your authenticity.”

“This is a crushing blow” actor Chris Evans called Boseman “a true original. He was a deeply committed and constantly curious artist. He had so much amazing work still left to create.”

“Captain America” actor Chris Evans called Boseman “a true original. He was a deeply committed and constantly curious artist. He had so much amazing work still left to create.”

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At the 2019 Screen Actors Guild Award, “Black Panther” won best ensemble, electrifying the room. Before an auditorium full of actors, Chadwick Boseman stepped to the microphone. He quoted Nina Simone: “To be young, gifted and black,” and put the moment in context.

“We know what it’s like to be told there isn’t a screen for you to be featured on, a stage for you to be featured on. ... We know what it’s like to be beneath and not above. And that is what we want to work with every day,” said Boseman.

“We knew that we could create a world that exemplified a world we wanted to see. We knew that we had something to give.”

Weather helps ease fires as many go home

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — California wildfires were slowly being corralled Friday as cooler, humid weather and reinforcements aided firefighters and tens of thousands of people allowed home after days of death and destruction.

In the past two days, evacuation orders were lifted for at least 50,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area and wine country, officials with the state fire agency, Cal Fire, said.

In heavily damaged areas, crews were working to restore electricity and water so more people could return to their homes.

Around the state, hundreds of wildfires — coming months earlier in the season than expected — have killed at least seven people, burned more than 2,000 square miles and prompted officials to order people living in several small communities to immediately evacuate Friday. Two fires in the area merged earlier in the week and have scorched 37 square miles. They were burning with no containment.

Wildfires are so bad in the western United States that about 200 active duty U.S. Army soldiers are being mobilized to help fight them, said officials with the National Interagency Fire Center. This is the first active duty mobilization for wildfire support since 2018.

More than 5,900 square miles have burned so far this year, and 105 large wildfires are burning across the western United States.

In California, about 170,000 people were under evacuation orders at the peak of the fires.

But a heat wave eased this week, and in the past few days cooler, more humid weather patterns slowed the spread of wildfires in Northern California as aid poured in from out of state and California National Guard troops joined the fight.

Evacuation orders for more than 20,000 people were lifted over the past 24 hours in San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, where a massive blaze caused by lightning was 27% surrounded, fire officials announced.

Three people reported missing in evacuation zones had been found, but there was a new report of one missing person, Santa Cruz County sheriff’s Chief Deputy Chris Clark said.

The fire has burned at least 575 homes. But the tally could rise, and about $2,000,000 people remained evacuated. Clark could not say exactly when they would be allowed home.

Execution of girl’s killer is 5th this year

Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — A Kansas girl’s killer Friday became the fifth federal inmate put to death this year, an execution that went forward only after a higher court tossed a ruling that would have required the government to get a prescription for the drug used to kill him.

Questions about whether the drug penobital causes pain prior to death had been a focus of appeals for Keith Nelson, 45, the second inmate executed this week in the Trump administration’s resumption of federal executions this summer after a 17-year hiatus.

Nelson, who displayed no outward signs of pain or distress during the execution, was pronounced dead at a federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind., at 4:32 p.m. — about nine minutes after the execution began.

There was silence from Nelson when a prison official looming over him asked if he had any last words to witnesses behind the execution-chamber glass. Those observers included the mother of 10-year-old Pamela Butler, who Nelson raped and strangled with a wire 21 years ago.

Nelson didn’t utter a word, grunt or shake his head no.

Nelson showed no remorse during a sentencing hearing statement and instead “blistered the district court and the victim’s family with a profanity laden tirade,” the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals noted.
NATION

Pieces: Louisiana begins arduous cleanup, recovery

FROM FRONT PAGE

The U.S. toll from the Category 4 hurricane stood at 14 deaths, with more than half of those killed by carbon monoxide poisoning from the unsafe operation of generators.

President Donald Trump planned to tour the damage in Louisiana and neighboring Texas on Saturday.

Across southwestern Louisiana, people were cleaning up from the hurricane that roared ashore early Thursday, packing 150 mph winds. Many were deciding whether they wanted to return home to miserable conditions or wait until basic services are finally restored.

At First United Methodist Church in Lake Charles, a work crew was battling water that continued to pour into the church building as it rained Friday. “This roof blew off. There’s some of it over there,” said Michael Putman, owner of Putman Restoration, pointing to part of the roof resting near the side of the building. A pile of black garbage bags sat outside the church, filled with insulation and ceiling tile.

Putman lives in Shreveport, which also got damage from the storm. But he said he drove down to Lake Charles to help the minister, who was his high school pastor.

“We slept in our truck in the parking lot last night,” he said.

Simply driving was a feat in Lake Charles, a city of 80,000 residents hit head on.

Power lines and trees blocked paths or created one-lane roads, leaving drivers to negotiate with oncoming traffic. Street signs were snapped off their posts or dangling. No stoplights worked, and the Dominican Republic en route to the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Caravans of utility trucks were sent to the building.

“Road flooding. A statement on the base Facebook page said Fort Polk had downed trees, power lines and road flooding.

The Army post is located about 70 miles north of Lake Charles, which suffered extensive damage from the hurricane. A 14-year-old girl from Leesville, the town outside the gates of Fort Polk, was killed when a tree fell on her house, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said Thursday. Nine other storm-related deaths have occurred in the state, according to the state health department.

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital on Fort Polk also suffered damage and lost power from the hurricane, according to its Facebook official page. The hospital will be open Monday for inpatient and emergency services only.

Ice was being provided to on-post residents Friday and one of the main gas stations has also run out of fuel, according to Fort Polk’s Facebook page.

“More fuel is on the way, but arrival time is unknown,” according to the post.

As of Friday, the Louisiana National Guard said they had evacuated more than 2,000 people and 20 pets from Calcasieu Parish, where Lake Charles is located. There are more than 6,200 Guard troops supporting efforts in response to Hurricane Laura.

Fort Polk is damaged by hurricane

By Caitlin M. Kenney

WASHINGTON — Several military bases in Fort Polk, La., have suffered damage and lost power from Hurricane Laura after the historic storm swept through the region Thursday.

The Post Main Chapel, which was being used as a shelter, suffered damage, forcing people to move to another chapel on the installation, according to Fort Polk’s official Facebook page.

The post’s communications was also not able to open Friday due to a failed generator.

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Protests erupt at Portland police building and mayor’s condo

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Fires set outside a law enforcement building that’s a frequent site for protests in Portland, Ore., prompt ed police to declare a riot early Saturday and detain several demonstrators.

Witnesses also said a car drove near the demonstration at the Portland Police Association building and fired several gunshots into the air. Video posted online showed shell casings in the street. No injuries were reported.

Officers had extinguished the fire at the police building and appeared to detain several protesters. It was unclear how many were arrested.

The commotion followed a sit-in in the lobby of the Portland mayor’s condo building Friday night. Protesters have issued demands, including police budget reductions and Mayor Ted Wheeler’s resignation, the Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

A crowd of about 150 had gathered outside the building.

Portland has been gripped by nightly protests for three months since the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The demonstrations, often violent, usually target police buildings and federal buildings. Some protesters have called for reductions in police budgets while the city’s mayor and some in the Black community have decried the violence, saying it’s counterproductive.

Seventy-four people are now facing federal charges related to protests that have rocked the city for three months since George Floyd was killed, the local U.S. attorney announced Thursday. The misdemeanor and felony charges include assaults on federal officers, arson and damaging federal property.

Earlier Friday, Wheeler had said he sent a letter to President Donald Trump declining his offers to help the city manage the protests. In early July, Trump sent more federal agents to the city to protect the courthouse, but local officials said their presence made things worse. The federal agents later pulled back.

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For more details, please refer to the original text.
WASHINGTON — Standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. famously laid out a vision for harmony between white and Black people 57 years ago, his son issued a sobering reminder about the persistence of police brutality and racist violence targeting Black Americans.

“We must never forget the American nightmare of racist violence exemplified when Emmett Till was murdered on this day in 1955, and the criminal justice system failed to convict his killers,” said Martin Luther King III, speaking to thousands who gathered Friday to commemorate the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

“Sixty-five years later (after Till’s murder), we still struggle for justice — demilitarizing the police, dismantling mass incarceration, and declaring as determinately as we can that Black lives matter,” King said.

To again in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, many felt compelled to join civil rights advocates in Washington to highlight a plague of police and vigilante violence that gave way to what many feel is an overdue reckoning on racial injustice. Some stood in sweltering temperatures in lines that stretched for several blocks, as organizers took temperatures as part of coronavirus protocols. Organizers reminded attendees to practice social distancing and wear masks throughout the program, although distancing was hardly maintained as the gathering grew in size.

Marchers chant as they gather at Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House during the March on Washington, on Friday, commemorating the 57th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech.

Associated Press

The state Justice Department has reversed its position and is trying to conduct an impartial investigation and can neither confirm nor deny the union’s version of events.

Ben Crump, an attorney for Blake’s family, did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment. He said earlier this week that Blake was only trying to break up a domestic dispute and did nothing to provoke police, adding that witnesses didn’t see him with a knife. Crump has called for the arrest of the officer who shot Blake and for the two other officers involved in the shooting to be fired.

Cellphone video shows Kenosha Police Officer Rusten Sheskey and another officer following Blake with their guns drawn as he walks around the front of a parked SUV as they responded to a domestic dispute. According to Matthews, the officers were dispatched there because of a complaint that Blake was attempting to steal the caller’s keys and vehicle. Matthews said officers were aware that Blake had an open warrant for felony sexual assault before they arrived.

Blake was armed with a knife, but officers did not initially see it, Matthews said. “The officers first saw him holding the knife while they were on the passenger side of the vehicle,” he said.

The bystander who recorded the shooting, Raysean White, 22, said he saw Blake scuffling with three officers and heard them yell, “Drop the knife! Drop the knife!” before gunfire erupted. He said he didn’t see a knife in Blake’s hands. State investigators have said only that officers saw a knife on the floor of the car. They have not said whether Blake threatened anyone with it.

Matthews said officers made multiple requests to Blake to drop the knife, but he was uncooperative. He said officers used a Taser on Blake, but it did not incapacitate him.

“Blake forcefully fought with the officers, including putting one of the officers in a headlock,” Matthews said. A second stun from a Taser also did not stop him, he said.

As Blake opened the driver’s door of the SUV, Sheskey pulled on Blake’s shirt and then opened fire. Blake’s three children were in the backseat.

“Based on the inability to gain compliance and control after using verbal, physical and less-lethal means, the officers drew their firearms,” Matthews said. “Mr. Blake continued to ignore the officers’ commands, even with the threat of lethal force now present.”

The state Justice Department has released almost no information about Sheskey or the other two officers, Vincent Arenas and Brittany Meronek.
UAE ruler formally ends boycott of Israel

Belarus leader cites alleged NATO threat to shelve up his rule

MINSK, Belarus—Belarusian authoritarian leader accused NATO on Friday of hatching aggressive plans and threatened neighbors Lithuania and Poland with counter-sanctions if they were to shore up his 26-year rule amid weeks of demonstrations against his reelection in a vote the opposition says was rigged.

President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the 9.5-million nation in Eastern Europe with an iron fist since 1994, blamed the West for fomenting demonstration in Belarus that he was trying to contain by turning it into a “bridgehead against Russia.”

“They want to topple this government and ruin it with another one that would ask a foreign country to send troops in support,” he said. “They want our market to sell their products.”

NATO has rejected previous such claims by Lukashenko.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said this week that the Belarusian leader tries to conjure up the image of outside forces threatening Belarus as an excuse for his crackdown on the opposition, which has seen hundreds of protesters beaten by police.

In addition, the idea that Belarus’ ailing Soviet-style economy would be seen as a beacon for exporters seems to defy current economic realities. Protests have been fueled by growing weariness about Lukashenko’s rule, his cavalier dismissal of the coronavirus pandemic and a bruising economic conflict with the EU over the break in a country where living standards were already sinking.

The 85-year-old Belarusian leader threatened to retaliate against neighbors Poland and Lithuania, which pushed strongly for the European Union’s sanctions against his government.

Lithuania also hosted the main opposition challenger in the vote, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who moved there after the vote, pressured by Belarusian authorities.

Lukashenko said Belarus would strike back by halting imports via Lithuanian ports and force its western neighbors to use longer routes via the Baltics and the Black Sea in their trade with Russia and China.

“Our defeat in Belarus, as we all can see, was key for them,” he said. “We will show them sanctions,” he said. “I have ordered the government to divert all trade flows away from Lithuanian ports. They have been stained, and now we will show them their place.”

He added that “they were doing transit via us, but now they will need to go over the Baltics or the Black Sea to trade with Russia.”

Lithuanian Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis responded in a Facebook post, saying that if Lukashenko fulfills his threat it will mostly hurt Belarus and its people.

Lukashenko has repeatedly sought to cast the protests as demanding his resignation as part of a Western plot against Russia, in a bid to secure Moscow’s support.

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned Thursday that he stands ready to send police into Belarus if protests there turn violent but sees no such need yet.

The wave of protests that came after election officials declared Lukashenko had won a sixth term in a landslide in the Aug. 9 presidential election has cast an unprecedented shadow on his rule.

Both the European Union and the United States have said the vote was neither free nor fair. A fierce crackdown on peaceful demonstrators in the days after the vote left nearly 7,600 people detained, hundreds injured by police and at least three protesters dead.

Japan’s ‘flying car’ gets off the ground, with a person aboard

TOKYO — The decades-old dream of zipping around in the sky as simply as driving on highways may be becoming less illusory.

Japan’s SkyDrive Inc., among the myriads of “flying car” projects around the world, has carried out a successful though modest test flight with one person aboard.

A video shown to reporters on Friday, a contraption that looked like a slick motorcycle with propellers lifted several feet off the ground, and hovered in a netted area for four minutes.

Tomohiro Fukuzawa, who heads the SkyDrive effort, said he hopes “the flying car” can be made into a real-life product by 2023, but he acknowledged that making it safe was critical.

“Of the world’s more than 100 flying car projects, only a handful has succeeded with a person on board,” he told The Associated Press.

“I hope many people will want to ride it and feel safe.”

The machine so far can fly for just five to 10 minutes but if that can become 30 minutes, it will have more potential, including exports to places like China, Fukuzawa said.

Unlike airplanes and helicopters, eVTOL, or “electric vertical takeoff and landing” vehicles offer quick point-to-point personal travel, at least in principle.

They could do away with the hassle of airports and traffic jams and the cost of hiring pilots, they could fly automatically.

Battery sizes, air traffic control and other infrastructure issues are among the many potential challenges to commercializing them.

“Many things have to happen,” said Sanjiv Singh, professor at the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, who co-founded Near Earth Autonomy, near Pittsburgh, which is also working on an eVTOL aircraft.

“If they cost $10 million, no one is going to buy them. If they cost $5 million, no one is going to buy them. If they fall out of the sky every so often, no one is going to buy them,” Singh said in a telephone interview.

The SkyDrive project began humbly as a volunteer project called Cartivator in 2012, with funding by top Japanese companies including automaker Toyota Motor Corp., electronics company Panasonic Corp. and video-game developer Bandai Namco.

A demonstration flight three years ago went poorly. But it has improved and the project recently received another round of funding, of $37 million, including from the Development Bank of Japan.
Disney patron accused of threats over masks

FL
ORLANDO — A man hit a security guard in the head and threatened to kill him at Epcot theme park when he was asked to follow Disney World’s mask rules, sheriff’s officials said. Enrico Toro, 35, was charged with misdemeanor battery, an Orange County Sheriff’s Office arrest report said.

According to deputies, Toro, his wife and three children arrived at Epcot’s security area wearing “improper masks,” the report said.

Toro “began cussing.” The security guard reached for his phone to notify a supervisor of the escalating situation when Toro struck the guard’s head with an “open hand,” the report said.

“The male continued cussing at (the security guard) and began threatening that he knew where he lived and was going to kill him,” the report said.

Drive-thru betting to be offered before derby

KY
LEXINGTON — People wanting to place bets on the Kentucky Derby can make a wager in a drive-thru at Keeneland, the Lexington track announced.

The Kentucky Derby and the Kentucky Oaks were postponed to Sept. 4 and 5 this year at Churchill Downs in Louisville due to the coronavirus pandemic. The races will be run without fans.

Keeneland said drive-thru betting will be offered on all the races at Churchill Downs for those two days. Patrons will complete a health screening and temperature check at Gate 1.

Officials: Mountain lion killed pastured horse

ID
HAILEY — Wildlife officials in Idaho said a mountain lion attacked and killed a horse while it was pastured.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game officers investigated and confirmed the mare was killed in its pastures in the Red Elephant Gulch region of Croy Canyon, just west of Hailey.

“They bite the back of the neck and just crush the spine,” department Regional Communications Manager Terry Thompson said. “They do the same thing as they would with a deer or an elk.”

Traps have been set to try and find the mountain lion responsible for the attack, officials said.

Ride along

MD
LARGO — Police in Maryland said that two men were charged with attempted murder after shooting three police officers who were responding to a home-invasion call.

The driver and a female passenger were released from the hospital, according to Prince George’s County Interim Police Chief Hector Velez. The third officer successfully underwent surgery.

Velez said the two suspects opened fire on the first officer to respond to the home-invasion call. The officer called for backup and responded “incredibly well under the pressure knowing that he had been shot three times,” Velez said.

School investigating post of swastika photo

IN
DALEVILLE — A central Indiana school has launched an investigation after a photo posted to social media appeared to show students forming the shape of a swastika on the gymnasium floor, school officials said.

The photo shows nine students, most of whom are lying on their backs on mats on the gym floor, making the shape of a swastika.

It recognizes a city’s work to attract, protect and inspire the appreciation of bees and other pollinators. It is an initiative of the Xerces Society, a nonprofit that aims to protect invertebrates and their habitats.

The AJC reported that Dawsonville’s City Hall complex has several new garden beds that have a variety of wildflowers used by pollinators. Numerous other Georgia cities have the “Bee City USA” designation, including Atlanta and Decatur, according to the newspaper.

Boat from 1800s to be restored for display

MI
HARBOR SPRINGS — A rusted and damaged boat built in the late 1800s by a northern Michigan inventor is undergoing an extensive restoration with the goal of putting the revamped vessel on display in the Lake Michigan resort community of Harbor Springs.

The Harbor Springs Area Historical Society began restoring the Aha after city officials requested the removal of the decaying boat near the city’s Department of Public Works building.

Inventor Ephraim Shay built the vessel in 1891 after moving to the Harbor Springs area in 1888. The all-steel Aha was a rarity because most boats built during that time were made of wood. Shay also developed a local railroad among his other projects, according to the Petoskey News-Review.

Police: Meth found in vehicle following chase

ND
MINOT — Police said they found a large amount of methamphetamine in the vehicle of a Minot man who led officers on a high-speed chase in northeastern North Dakota.

The pursuit started in Berthold after the driver sped away from a traffic stop for a minor offense, according to police.

He crashed the vehicle about 15 miles away in Burlington, officials said.

The driver and a female passenger fled from the vehicle along a river bank.

The 36-year-old woman was found hiding in the brush and was arrested. While a large amount of methamphetamine was found in the vehicle, according to officials, Ward County Jail staff said they saw the woman flushing drugs down a toilet, the Minot Daily News reported.

The 40-year-old driver is wanted for fleeing from law enforcement, possession of methamphetamine and other charges.

From wire reports
A decade ago, Katy Perry could sing the alphabet and top the music charts.

Her name was synonymous with being No. 1 on the Billboard chart, as the pop star rocketed to stardom with “Teenage Dream,” which propelled her to international pop-star status. For me in 2017, 2018, I went through a reckoning experience roughly three years ago when she released “Witness,” which had some success but didn’t dominate the charts like she’s used to doing. Though the first single, “Chained to the Rhythm,” became a Top 5 hit, the other singles fizzled, and the star’s popularity dwindled as newcomers, mainly budding rap stars, took over the music scene.

“For me in 2017, 2018, I went through a reckoning experience roughly three years ago when she released “Witness,” which had some success but didn’t dominate the charts like she’s used to doing. Though the first single, “Chained to the Rhythm,” became a Top 5 hit, the other singles fizzled, and the star’s popularity dwindled as newcomers, mainly budding rap stars, took over the music scene.

“Ten years after she rocketed to stardom with ‘Teenage Dream,’ Katy Perry learns to let go of being No. 1. AP: What will fans hear on “Smile”? Perry: It’s a record full of hopefulness and resilience and a little bit of joy and some fun. I think that it’s always a good time to have a little hope injected, especially these days. This record is really talking about my own experience in walking through hell and finding the light and coming out of that. So if anyone else is having that experience in walking through hell and finding the light, it kind of paralleled the feeling at the time. ‘Holy crap, this is what’s important. Forget about all the B.S. or ignore, I just like to come to terms. I’m not perfect, I am not invincible. I am not perfect. I have fallen flat on my face so many different times and learned from that growth and have been living in the public, in the spotlight for over 12 years, and have had moments that were really intense. For me, I don’t necessarily like to avoid or ignore, I just like to come to terms. I’m like, ‘Look, I needed that. That was a humbling experience.’ Obviously when you’re in it, you hate it. But I do believe that you have the choice when you can zoom out just a little bit from the situation and say, ‘OK, what am I getting from this? Where is the lesson? Where is the growth?’ Not just like, ‘F-it all to hell, Joyce Ann, just burn! Everything should just burn!’ But where is the gratitude for this obstacle? You namedrop your parents on the song “Only Love.” What was their reaction to that? Perry: I played it for my mom; she was very touched. This song really talks about if life were to hand you a curveball, and the weird thing is that I was putting the finishing touches on it, vocally, in my bedroom during that week of March 13 when everyone went into lockdown and everybody was, like, scrubbing their lemons and buying thousands of toilet paper rolls. Nobody knew what the hell was going on, and there’s so much intense feeling and emotion. And I was almost finished with my record. This was the last song that I put on the record and it’s funny ‘cause it kind of paralleled the feeling at the time. ‘Holy crap, life is handing me a curveball, and what is precious to me anymore? What’s really important?’ You start to go, ‘Whoa, this is what’s important. Forget about all the B.S. and even the career stuff. I gotta take care of my mom and my dad. I gotta take care of my mom and my dad.’ And I think that everybody kind of shifted gears a little bit. But this song is really about, like, at the end of it all ... what are we gonna say? ‘Oh, I wished I worked one more day.’ Or are you just going to say, ‘I wish I had a little bit more love. I wish I connected with my brother or my sister or my mom or my dad just a little bit more, or my partner or my children or whomever.’ You know? I just want a little bit more love. It’s the 10-year anniversary of “Teenage Dream,” which matched the record Michael Jackson’s “Bad” set for most No. 1 singles from an album. How does it feel when you think about that album and period of your life? Continued on page 13.
Katy Perry

Katy Perry has two very personal projects being released this summer — the 12-track album “Smile” and her baby girl, who arrived Thursday. Only one really will make people grin. “Smile” comes three years after the dismal release of “Witness,” a criminally underappreciated album that’s considered a commercial dud. That album contained the sociopolitical “Chained to the Rhythm,” and the music flirted with a more hip-hop sound. Its underperformance and some heartbreak, we assume — led to a period that Perry describes in the liner notes as “my own darkest times.”

“Smile” is a course-correction back to pure pop, with a lot more hooks and a lot more bops. It’s Perry’s “I’m so sorry” album, littered with references to a chastened songwriter — “ego check,” “humble pie,” “better version” and “2.0.” Like the cover image, she’s a sad clown.

To be honest, there are only rare moments of levity. Perry is pregnant with her first child with actor Orlando Bloom, and one of the best lines on the album is, “Look at me now / I’m in full bloom.”

Most of the set is a bit of a bummer. Just the titles alone say it all: “Never Really Over,” “Cry About It Later” and “Teary Eyes” — are about mistakes, regret and lessons learned. This isn’t an album of pop songs as much as a therapy session set to music.

“I’ve been about this right after night punching a pillow,” she sings on “Resilient.” “I know the higher I climb / The harder the wind blows.” She’s even sad when she’s celebrating overcoming couples’ issues in “Champagne Problems.”

The fireworks have vanished. There’s no eye of the tiger anymore. Her dancing sharks have left the stage. Just the depressive mood only lifted with the electric title song, clearly the best of a middling list of tunes. “Smile” is Perry at her most Perry: “Use’d to be dull / Now I sparkle,” she sings, finally with a little more believable.

There are misfires, like, “Tucked,” a Kylie Minogue rip-off, and “Harleys in Hawaii,” which is clumsy and, despite a Charlie Puth writing assist. So “Smile” is something of a housekeeping album. Apologies to everyone — parents, fans, lovers, other women, old lovers. Here’s hoping motherhood gives Perry a real reason to smile.

— Mark Kennedy

Associate Press

Josh Turner

Country State of Mind (MCA Nashville)

From its title to its songs and sounds, Josh Turner’s “Country State of Mind” and its idols and beyond, a compendium of some great country music.

Turner is from the genre’s traditional side and his voice, naturally deep but capable of taking high flight, is perfect for this collection.

Several tracks have guest performers, including two of Turner’s idols, John Anderson and Randy Travis. Allison Moorer joins Turner on Hank Williams Jr.’s “Alone and Forsaken,” which Turner describes in the liner notes as “my all-time favorite country song.”

“Forever and Ever, Amen” is the best-known song on the album. Travis only sings the closing “Amen” this time, but his first recording since a 2013 stroke he’s still recovering from, and it’s a deeply moving moment.

Kris Kristofferson duets on his “Why Me,” a nod to Turner’s gospel roots, and Anderson’s appearance on “When You’re Ready” gives the song a double dose of subwoofer-shaking vocals.

Maddie & Tae and Runaway June represent Nashville’s younger sensons, with Maddie & Tae’s contribution to Bruce Robinson’s “Desperately,” a 2004 hit for George Strait, especially poignant.

Johnny Cash’s gloomy “The Caretaker” is an apt epilogue, with Turner personalizing some of the aging cemetery custodian’s lines — “Who’s gonna cry / When old Josh dies?”

Turner’s congenial style and the smart selection make “Country State of Mind” a great introduction into the genre and a terrific reminder of some of its greatest songs.

— Pablo Gorondi

Associated Press

Kolby Cooper

Vol. 2 (Combustion Music)

Kolby Cooper could add a fresh voice to country radio. If he could only get past the censors.

The 21-year-old fire breather from the piney woods of East Texas offers relief from the parade of inferior products that’s been pouring from John Deere tractor references that’s still way too pervasive these days. He’s edgy, that’s for sure.

On “1, 2, 3,” a five-song EP, Cooper doesn’t take long to start the beatdown. One of the songs, “2 Words,” begins with a 15-second banjo intro and then drops hard into a breakup song as emphatic as any you will ever hear. And the two words it’s built around are enough to take commercial radio off the table.

That’s probably OK, with Cooper, who still lives in Brandon, Texas, not far from Palestine, a little farther from Dallas. He has the look of a guy who might pump your gas at one of those East Texas stations that still hasn’t converted to pay-at-the-pump.

His music pulsates with the give-a-care vibe of some one still kicking dust off his jeans.

Cooper’s first EP as “Kolby’s Vol. 1,” was followed by his only full-length album, “Good Ones Never Last,” which helped make him a word-of-mouth sensation. His previous best-known breakup song, “It Ain’t Me,” registered more than 18 million YouTube views and 1.1 million Spotify streams.

Yes, breakup songs are a specialty. But Cooper, who married early, says neither song is autobiographical.

“I showed that song to my wife, and she was like, ‘Oh, sure, that’s a good song. But are we OK?’ ”

The answer was yes. And Cooper shows his range and depth on new song “Cannonsball,” a ballad about commitment that’s on his mind in its own way.

Versatile and fearless, Cooper is the kind of voice that could redeem country music — if only his songs can be cleared for airplay.

— Scott Stroud

Associated Press

Troye Sivan

In a Dream (Capitol)

Somewhere between a single and an album, Sivan’s “In a Dream” is the best song on the album, and that’s how we get our latest dose of Troye Sivan’s fantastic voice.

At times, Sivan’s vocals so distorted he sounds like he’s singing deep in a swimming pool.

The clear standout is the dreamy “Take Yourself Home.” Visitor Cooper on a Touchdown finished during the pandemic. It is stunning, hypnotic and sexy. Even it has an anti-urban feel. “I’m tired of the city,” he sings. “If I’m gonna die, let’s die somewhere pretty.”

“Easy” has a 80s, “Pretty in Pink” vibe with echoing computer-altered vocals and spacy, thick slabs of synth. The less-than-a-minute “could cry just think about you” has Troye’s vocals so distorted he sounds like he’s singing deep in a swimming pool.

The title track comes last, a studdy and more conventional song offering a glimpse of an artist stuck in heartbreak. “It’s all just feeling real now / So far away but I still feel you everywhere.”

Not too little, not too much. Sivan’s EP is the Gold-locks of its greatest songs.

— Mark Kennedy

Associated Press

Deep Purple

“Whoosh!” (earMUSIC)

“Whoosh!” makes it three for three for the pairing of Deep Purple and producer Bob Ezrin, an album that at its numerous heights evokes the band’s most successful era on “Who’s Bad?”

With a stable lineup for nearly 20 years, the band’s latest album is built on its best assets: Ian Gillan’s robust vocals, the sturdy foundation set by the rhythm section of Ian Paice and Roger Glover, Steve Morse’s inventive inventory of six-string tones and producer Bob Ezrin.

First song and first single “Throw My Bones” is a magnificent introduction after the three-year break since the band’s previous studio effort, “InFinite.”

“Drop the Weapon,” a call for de-escalation and wise choices; “We’re All The Same In The Dark,” a tongue-in-cheek, corporate pick-up line; the debâcle-de-clown’s “No Need To Shout”; and the haunting “Step By Step” all keep the needles in or near the red.

As for instrumental “And the Address,” is Deep Purple revealing a title clue? The title is in the running order, and the mere fact that it was re-recorded, only a tease in the way the Beatles fed the “Paul is dead” rumors with clues in songs supposedly confirming his premature demise? After all, the group’s 2017-2019 tour was called “The Long Goodbye,” but concerts are planned, post-pandemic, behind this album, as well.

Walters, a long-time member of Deep Purple’s towering “Mark II” lineup missing from the current roster, Ritchie Blackmore and the late Jon Lord, “And the Address” is the last song on the album, but for a bonus track. It was also the first tune on the band’s 1968 debut, “Shades of Deep Purple,” so it is just a coincidence, or are they moving the circle and really drawing the shades on their career?

Any band able to emulate its best years shouldn’t call it quits after an album as good as “Whoosh!” — unless Deep Purple wants to go out on a peak.

— Pablo Gorondi

Associated Press
Meet Tim Williams, one of the YouTube twins who reignited interest in an old Phil Collins hit

BY MIKAEL WOOD  
Los Angeles Times

Tim Williams and his twin brother, Fred, have rocketed to internet celebrity over the past few weeks thanks to that most modern of cultural artifacts: the reaction video, in which the comedy or drama of someone’s first encounter with a piece of art becomes itself a piece of art available to be encountered by someone else.

In their most talked-about clip, which has been viewed more than 6.8 million times since they posted it on YouTube in late July, the Williams brothers listen intimately to Phil Collins’ eerie 1981 hit “In the Air Tonight.”

How could they, at 22, have missed this undeniable (and oft-sampled) pop classic? “I think we were late bloomers of everything,” Tim said in a phone interview. “That’s why we didn’t hear none of this music.”

In the video, he and Fred are sitting in Tim’s bedroom in their mother’s house in Gary, Ind., a 2Pac poster hangs on a wall behind them, while between them looms a graphic of Collins’ stony visage as pictured on the cover of the singer’s “Face Value” album. “He look like he staring into my soul,” Fred says. “I’m scared — I can’t look at him.”

The emotional payoff comes when the two flip out at the sound of Collins’ famously slow-to-arrive drum fill. Both brothers are knocked back in their swivel chairs; Tim turns to Fred in disbelief, as though he needs to confirm that his brother heard what he just heard. “I ain’t never seen nobody drop a beat three minutes in a song,” Fred says, but part of what’s magical about the video is that you, the viewer, have seen someone do that — this exact someone, in fact.

To watch the Williams twins experience the surprise you know Collins has in store — and then to watch it again (and again), because they’re so insanely charming — is to feel the past, present and future all jostling for space in the same moment.

On their YouTube channel, TwinsthenewTrend — which Tim said grew from 50,000 subscribers to more than 400,000 in less than a month — the brothers offer their first-listen analysis of dozens of songs, including the Carpenter’s “We’ve Only Just Begun,” Aerosmith’s “Dream On” and “Jolene” by Dolly Parton, whose official Twitter account recently shouted out the Williamses. “No point in begging,” the tweet read. “Jolene already stole these two.”

Each of the videos — the “Jolene” clip has more than 3.7 million views — showcases the same warmth and curiosity that propelled “In the Air Tonight” to trending-topic ubiquity. (Downloads for Collins’ original increased by more than 1,500% in the video’s wake, according to Billboard.) If you know the classics they’re reacting to, you watch to have some of your assumptions confirmed. But you also hear new things through the ears of the brothers. Have you ever stopped to consider, as they do, how crucial “Jolene’s” zippy tempo is to its sense of desperation?

Tim said he and his brother — Fred is older by 75 minutes — started doing reaction videos a year ago as a way to express their love of music. Although they began with hip-hop songs, they quickly realized that doing older tunes from other genres would help them stand out on the increasingly crowded platform.

“We just do it the first time.” Of the reaction to their reactions, Tim said, “It’s been crazy,” and added that he’s been fielding calls from TV shows and “people hitting us up for deals or people who just want to send us stuff.” He added that he and Tim have been approached to create their own show, although he was unclear for now what that might look like.

And do they ever do a second take? Maybe sharpen a funny comment from their first go-through? “When corona over, we’ll most definitely go,” he said. “But we just been here in Indiana.”
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

ALTERNATIVE CINEMA
BY FRANCIS HEANEY / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Francis Heaney, of New York City, is a professional puzzle maker and editor who frequently constructs the American Values Club Crossword. For 33 years he has edited puzzle books for Sterling. His early interest in puzzles was encouraged by his grandmother, who gave him a subscription to Games magazine for his 10th birthday. Francis has been contributing crosswords to The Times, on and off, since 1996. — W.S.

ACROSS
1 Red Guard members
2 They can't get canceled
14 Sticky situation
20 Remove braids from
21 "Likewise!"
22 Way to go
23 Alternative title for "The Dirty Dozen"
25 Sorted in order
26 Blue here
27 Complete
28 "Voye d'Eu..." (French map notation)
30 Allan with six Simms
31 Pulls from a traffic drum
32 Alternative title for "Cleopatra!"
38 Words to a betrother
40 Partner of cut
415 __ Chapel, New York City public building in continuous use since 1766
42 Descent often topped with caramel sauce
43 Newswire co.
47 Zip
48 Disc-break components
51 Alternative title for "Frankenstein"
55 Took a load off
56 Monopoly token elected by an internet vote
57 "Sure, that makes sense"
58 Trust
60 "Another" (NPR game show)
62 Toyota model since 1966
64 Van __ Calif.
65 D.C. donor
67 "Hey, pal, over here!"
68 & Alternative title for "To Kill a Mockingbird"
72 Female friend in France
73 Phillips who played Eliza in the original cast of "Hamilton"
76 Hook's sidekick
79 "The Hangover" co-star
83 Mortgage co.
85 Just out of the freezer
88 They feature clowns and rope tricks
89 Gap-organizing school dances
90 Make a move
92 Alternative title for "Titanic!"
94 Hells Kitty company
96 Calendar spans: Abb.
97 Actress Tyler who will be an age in 2031
98 Stopovers
99 Gives a hoot
101 "Ella and ___" (1956 jazz album)
104 Sandwich brand
106 Alternative title for "Green Girl!"
110 Shapshinik holders
114 Shankar who taught star to George Harrison
115 ASCAP alternative
116 __-sale
118 __-skis (classic children's book)
119 Nickola's first cracker brand, introduced in 1899
121 Alternative title for "The Name of the Rose"
126 Duck dish
127 "Well, guess I have to try again"
128 Develop over time
129 Lowbow art
130 Round things
131 Terry Bradshaw, for his entire career

DOWN
1 Like commercials, often
2 First name of a Peace Nobelist that ends ironically
3 "Einstein on the Beach," e.g.
4 "...say"
5 Scholar
6 Seating section
7 Recipients of venture capital
8 Joined a petition
9 What a dental scaler removes
10 Senator Kobuchar
11 Production co. behind "Riveda" and "Newhart"
12 "Once upon a midnight dreary..."
13 Ending with ultra- or super-
14 Sauce on chicken Parmesan
15 Parts of zygotes
16 French automaker
17 They don't go much higher than the tongue
18 Soft leather
19 Two-door or four-door
20 Unenlightened response to "Wanna?"
21 Upper limit
22 Turned in
24 Charles__ religious leader known as "The Father of Modern Revivalism"
25 Lengths for rulers
36 Killed time
37 Workload that must be met
39 Pets kept in terrariums
42 Basil-hocking gip
43 Something trademarked
44 Laptop brand
46 "...be an honor"
47 Head-butts
50 (Actually, don't delete this)
52 Smooth-tongued
53 Painter Magritte
54 "The Simpsons" character with a Ph.D.
55 Catch
77 Slinger Hilde who was the 2009 World Series MVP
78 Pasture parent
80 Nuevo (Mexican state)
81 Like grass you can smell, perhaps
82 Hits assigned at birth
84 Boxer Ali
85 Thor who choreographed "Hair"
78 Stone to cast!
79 Nail-polish brand
84 Modern letters
91 Soothing summer soak
93 Chart-toppers
95 Raised sculptures
100 Prefix with pathetic
102 Needs medicine, say
110 "A likely story"
120 O.E.D. part: Abb.
121 Casino in the country: Abb.
123 Ivy League nickname
124 Make a break for it
125 Had

GUNSTON STREET

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

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RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE

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A new contactless way to pay

By Sam Dean
Los Angeles Times

New contactless way to pay

Using facial recognition as a form of payment — creepy or cool?

problems at once: slow lines and high fees from payment processing and credit card companies. Those fees can run as high as 3 percent for each transaction — small change that adds up, considering most restaurants run on 3-5 percent profit margins. Because PopID payments come directly from the users’ preloaded accounts, Miller said, “there’s enough arbitrage built in that we can cut the rates on dozens of cards and Apple Pay” and still make money.

But trust is hard to earn when it comes to facial recognition. Miller said the company is complying with the strictest laws in the nation for face data, the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act, and prioritizes customer consent for all uses of personal information.

Some privacy advocates see an important distinction between government use of facial recognition technology and use by private businesses — as long as the businesses don’t end up giving their data to the government.

That scenario was vividly illustrated in July, when the digital rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation found that a San Francisco business had shared a database of surveillance footage with access to a database like PopID’s, protesters who used the payment service could be quickly identified en masse.

Nathan Sheard, associate director of community organizing at EFF, said written, informed consent would be key to ethical use of the technology, as well as a clear policy of pushing back when law enforcement comes knocking to request access to the PopID database and informing the user if the company is ordered by a court to comply.

Miller said that level of protection is baked into PopID’s user agreement and basic structure. Customers choose to sign up for the system and have to click a button or tell a cashier every time they use it, setting it apart from the kind of passive surveillance that most privacy advocates argue is ripe for abuse. PopID’s software also runs on stand-alone devices, which means companies can’t simply connect their own security cameras and start logging their employees’ every move in a searchable database.

Most important, the agreement signed by users when joining the service makes clear that PopID is offering an option to pay or signing up for a loyalty points system with a given shop.

He and his wife are users of Outdoor Tech’s wired Chops while skiing for music and hands-free calls, so they don’t have to dig out a smartphone buried in their ski jacket.

Late last season they switched to the Bluetooth Chips 2.0 for the same great sound and convenience without dealing with the wire. He confirmed that the chips fit in the ear pocket of the ski helmet and produce great sound with the ability to hear ambient sound.

Outdoor Tech takes it a step further with the Chips Ultra true wireless headphones ($229.95), a totally cable-free audio solution. Each slick-looking Bluetooth 5.0 speaker is just a little smaller than the Chops 2.0, and fits into helmets with a swivel and compatible ear pads. While the sound out of the Chops 2.0 was perfectly acceptable, I thought the Chips Ultra gave me a little more bass.

Online: outdoortechnology.com

Outdoor Tech's Chips Ultra true wireless headphones have 40 mm drivers and a waterproof, micro-USB charge for hands-free calls.

Outdoor Tech/TNS
Trump botched his no speech and no one will care

By Jonathan Bernstein

Nomination speeches at normal conventions are easy. Joe Biden’s was not. Normally, speeches given remotely during a pandemic aren’t that hard. Donald Trump rubbed his nose into it.

This year? I doubt it will make any difference at all to the November results. No one remembers this things very long, and even had reviews of what Trump gets, would be rapidly forgotten.

That said, Trump is behind in the polls, so speeches might be an attempt to shore up beyond his strongest supporters. But there was nothing new here; even had it been well-written and well-delivered and well-staged, it would have been just another long-v党的建设 — of his usual lines.

Put it this way: If there were voters out there who were apt to support Trump for defeating the pandemic with a travel ban back in January, or who were willing to pretend along with him that the VA Choice bill signed into law by Barack Obama was one of Trump’s big accomplishments in office, they were already on board the Trump train.

But it was not the best version of that speech. It was one of the worst. Trump still has a big problem that looks awkward while using it, delivers the lines in a dull monotone, and frequently botches them.

It’s hard to know for sure, but part of his problem appears to be that he doesn’t look at the notes in front of him. He looks awkward while using it, delivers the lines in a dull monotone, and frequently botches them.

It starts from the title. The exit poll is a poll, which means it has a margin of error. Don’t treat the numbers as if they were given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Second, the exit poll is a national survey, which means it is a poll, which means it has a margin of error. No, Trump didn’t totally rebuild a depleted military, even though he could argue he did. But if he is convinced that all he has to do is keep his die-hard voters with him, and he’ll be fine. That hasn’t worked in the approval polls, where overall has he been the least popular president in the history of the polling era. It didn’t work out at all well in the 2018 midterms. And so far, the polls indicate that he is working well in his re-election campaign.

That doesn’t mean he can’t win. But if he does, it seems likely it will only be because of the cause, and certainly not because of his speech.

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. His columns reflect his own opinions, and the column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Orwellian.

With the convention season over and the sprint to November about to begin, it might be useful to look once again at the 2016 presidential exit poll. The survey offers a window into that year’s electorate and will allow us to see where we are now and where we are headed over the next two months.

For example, one might look at the current state of our political parties. The exit poll is a national poll. It is not a poll of likely voters. It is a poll of all Americans who were registered to vote, who were given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

As you watch the presidential contest and hear about the latest poll, keep in mind what happened in 2016 — how groups turned out and how they voted. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by 2.1 points margin of error. The exit poll was 60% to 34%. Did that mean anything?

White evangelicals have been among the president’s strongest supporters. They accounted for 26% of exit poll voters in 2016, and Trump carried them by a stunning 64 points to 16%. It was not a foregone conclusion.

Trump should again carry the group over in 2020. But if the suburbs vote — and whether rural or urban voters are changing their minds is widely viewed as an important swing group. After all, Trump won suburban voters by only 4 points in 2016, 49% to 45%, and suburban voters split evenly (at 49% each) in the 2018 midterm exit poll. That change undoubtedly helped Democrats make significant gains in the House.

But small changes from 2016 to 2018 in both rural areas and urban America could also benefit one party or the other.

Clinton won rural voters 60% to 34% in 2016, but two years later, the exit poll showed Democrats improving on that performance. Clinton won 55% to 42%, while Trump won with a 16-point lead among whites.

The suburbs vote — and whether urban or rural voters are changing their votes — should tell us something important about the November election. That is the bottom line.

You will see a lot of polls with ballot tests and subsamples over the next two months. Keep in mind when you read the numbers and the demographic categories that you can tell you how voting groups have changed over the past four years.

And don’t forget about those state polls, which can be equally helpful if they present accurate snapshots of the races in states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Florida, Arizona and Minnesota.
**SCORING/SPORTS BRIEFS**

**Pro soccer**

**MLS EASTERN CONFERENCE**

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**Pro basketball**

**WNBA EASTERN CONFERENCE**

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**Auto racing**

**Wawa 250 Powered by Coca-Cola**

**NASCAR Xfinity Series**

At Daytona International Speedway

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**BMW Championship**

PGA Fedex Cup Playoffs

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**Golf**

**LPGA Tournament**

At Pinchase Country Club

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**Tennis**

**Western & Southern Open**

At US Open Tennis Center

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**Briefly**

**McIlroy, Cantlay share lead at Olympic Fields**

OLYMPIA FIELDS, Ill. Rory McIlroy doesn’t need fans to keep his head in the game at the BMW Championship. Olympic Fields is so tough it won’t allow that even for his full attention on every shot.

McIlroy and Patrick Cantlay may have been a bit surprised Friday and shrugged it off because that’s bound to happen on the toughest test the PGA Tour has faced since COVID.

But by the end of another steamy afternoon south of Chicago, they were both sitting—and Cantlay’s 13-under 263 was enough to share the 3-hole lead with McIlroy.

It was plenty tough for Tiger Woods, whose PGA Tour season appears to be turning from bowels to bowels.

He didn’t have enough good shots to atone for his bad ones, and he had to make a 35-foot par putt on the final hole to keep him at 10 laps to go.

Ross Chastain waited much longer than his more famous companion, Chas- tain tucked racing leader and Kaulig teammate AJ Allmendinger on the final lap, allowing the 36-year-old Dyson to pick up a victory no one saw coming.

Chastain made a move on the inside and was able to turn his sideways and clipped Allmendinger, turning him sideways and collecting both Chevros. Austin Cindric also was involved.

Haley slipped through the smoke and took the checkered flag — his last checker at the superspeedway.

**White Sox acquire Dyson from Pirates**

CHICAGO — The White Sox acquired speedy outfielder Jarrod Dyson in a trade with Pittsburgh on Friday and re- instated Nick Madrigal from the 10-day injured list.

Dyson, who had just .157 (8-for-57) this season, but he swiped 30 bags last year. He won the stolen base title in 2015 with the White Sox and could serve as a valuable pinch runner for Chicago as it chases its first playoff appearance since 2016.

The White Sox sent interna- tional signing bonus pool money to the last-place Pirates for the 36-year-old Dyson.

— Associated Press
New commitments as playoffs resume

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — NHL players want change that makes their communities safer. They want people to vote — hopefully in their home areas.

And they want to keep playing basketball.

Teams returned to the court Friday after the NHL and the National Basketball Players Association agreed on commitments that made players comfortable continuing.

An emotional Chris Paul, the union president, detailed the events of the past two days, when players upset by the latest police shooting of a Black man left them considering leaving the NBA’s campus and games.

“We’re all hurt, we’re all tired of just seeing the same thing over and over and again and everybody just expects us to be OK just because we get paid great money,” Paul said. “We’re human, we have real feelings and I’m glad that we got a chance to get in a room and talk with one another and not just cross paths and say good luck in your game today.”

Play stopped Wednesday when the Bucks didn’t take the court for their playoff game against Orlando, showing their frustration with the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin and acts of racial injustice.

The NHL and NHL Players’ Association met for two days the last two days, during which players met among themselves and with coaches and owners before an agreement to resume was reached.

“The key to this is that I think we all needed to take a breath,” Clippers coach Doc Rivers said. “We needed a moment to breathe. It’s not lost on how that George Floyd didn’t live to that moment. But we did and we took it. And the players took it, and they got to refocus on the things they wanted to focus on outside of their jobs.”

High on that list is voting, mentioned frequently in a joint statement by the league and the NHLPA.

Many within the league of primarily Black players have focused on the importance of voting for the need for places in inner cities where minorities can do so safely. With no NBA games to be played in November, arenas are an ideal place for it.

“Atlanta, Detroit, Charlotte and Sacramento were already on board. Houston’s Toyota Center was locked in this week. Madison Square Garden and the arenas for the Clippers, Dallas and Utah were already on board. I said Miami is working hard to make its facility available.”

All team owners who also control their arena property will work with local officials to turn their buildings into a voting location for the 2020 general election to allow for safe, in-person voting.

Paul pointed out that practice facilities would be helpful if arenas can’t be secured.

The players and the league will also immediately establish a social justice coalition, made up of players, coaches and owners, that will focus on issues such as voting access and advocating for meaningful police and criminal justice reform.

And the NHL and players will work with TV networks to create advertising spots during the playoffs reminding viewers of the post-season promotions greater engagement in the election process and their communities.

Paul said he’s never seen anything like the events of the previous days during his 15-year career. He also spoke with Blake’s father.

“We understand how strong our voice is, how powerful our power is and ultimately we decided if we go away from this stage we don’t necessarily have that same platform, so we stood in solidarity,” Paul said. “We’re going to continue to play but we’re also going to continue to make sure that our voices are heard.”

NHL players use pause to focus on concerns

BY JOHN WARRIOR
Associated Press

Braydon Coburn was polite but stern in declining to answer the question.

A day after NHL players showed a united front, prompting the league to postpone two nights of playoff games to focus on racial injustice concerns, the veteran Tampa Bay Lightning defender wasn’t deviating from the message.

“Thanks for the question. I appreciate that,” Coburn began during the Lightning’s Zoom conference call Friday. “But for the most part, and especially today and yesterday, we kind of want to make sure we keep our attention and the conversation around the issues.”

Questions about lineup changes, power plays and impending consecutive nights were placed on pause along with Friday’s two scheduled games.

The emphasis was instead on more important societal matters taking place outside the playoff bubbles in Toronto and Edmont- on, Alberta, and on the player-driven conversations that led to the NHL joining North America’s other pro sports leagues in stopping play.

“I think the other leagues initiated this,” Coburn said, referring to the NBA and other sports, which postponed games on Wednesday while the NHL continued to play. “I think for us, we’re at the table now, and that’s really the important thing.”

The NHL altered its schedule with three games each set for Saturday and Sunday.

While players and coaches representing the four Eastern Conference teams spoke on video calls, the four West teams went silent a day after making a powerful statement shortly after games were postponed.

Five players, three of them minorities, stepped in front of an array of microphones, dozens of others — all wearing masks — as- sembled in rows behind them in a significant show of support in a league predominantly made up of white players.

“It’s great that the NBA did this and MLB and the WNBA, they have a lot of Black players in those leagues. But for all these athletes in here to take a stand and say, ‘You know what? We see the problem, too, and we stand behind you,’ said Vegas forward Ryan Reaves, who is Black. “I go to war with these guys, and I hate their guts on the ice, but I couldn’t be more proud of these guys. The statement they’ve made today is something that’s going to last.”

Reaves was among many in noting a two-day pause isn’t going to solve the issue of racism in the wake of the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin last weekend. And yet, the chance to spend two days to allow players to hold in-depth conversations on social justice was deemed an im- portant start.

“We all realize nothing is going to be fixed by tomorrow morn- ing,” Tampa Bay defenceman Luke Schenn said. “But this is a situation where everyone needs to learn and ask questions and do what’s right and be a good person in the world.”

The day, however, couldn’t end without a racial concern being raised. The NHL is investigating whether former Florida Panthers general manager Dale Tallon made racially insensitive comments before the team was elimi- nated by the New York Islanders in Toronto earlier this month.

Lightning coach Jon Cooper said he wasn’t aware of the allega- tions made against Tallon when asked how far the NHL had still had to go in addressing racial concerns.

“I don’t know. Can we sit here and say is it just hockey?” Cooper said. “To answer your question, is the league behind? No. The league’s just learning like everyone else. The league’s in a better place today than it was a couple of months ago, and definitely it was a couple of years ago.

“I’m telling you that the players behind me are all trying to use this forum to be better,” he said. “We’re standing united on this front.”
**American League**

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After World Series.

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<th>Score</th>
<th>Team B</th>
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<td>14–13</td>
<td>N.Y. Yankees</td>
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<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>LA Dodgers</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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**Thursday’s games**

**West Division**

- San Diego at Colorado
- Arizona at LA Dodgers

**East Division**

- Miami at N.Y. Mets, ppd.
- Oakland at Texas, ppd.

**Friday’s games**

**West Division**

- San Diego at Colorado
- Arizona at LA Dodgers

**East Division**

- Miami at N.Y. Mets
- Oakland at Texas

**This date in baseball**

- Ty Cobb made his major league debut, batting a double off the White Sox. Louis Cogdell (2). WP—Atkins (1). LHP—San Francisco.

**MLB Scoreboard**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Score</th>
<th>Team B</th>
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<td>Game 3</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>2–1</td>
<td>Boston</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**Postseason predictions**

The Mariner’s J.P. Crawford, left, gets congratulations for achieve the offensive milestone during the sixth inning Friday against the Angels in Anaheim, Calif.

**White Sox, Royals**

- Kansas City at Chicago
- Chicago at Kansas City
- Los Angeles at Texas
- Texas at Los Angeles

**Padders, Rockies**

- San Diego at Colorado
- Colorado at San Diego

**Phillies, Braves**

- Atlanta at Philadelphia
- Philadelphia at Atlanta

**Diamondbacks, Giants**

- San Francisco at Arizona
- Arizona at San Francisco

**This date in baseball**

- Ty Cobb made his major league debut, batting a double off the White Sox. Louis Cogdell (2). WP—Atkins (1). LHP—San Francisco.
**Mets sweep doubleheader with Yankees**

**By Jake Seiner**

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Dominic Smith wept on Wednesday night, disheartened and drained by another long 24 hours as a Black man in America. A day later, he said he felt uplifted after teammates joined him in a memorable protest.

Back in his comfort zone Friday, the New York Mets outfielder took a starring role in a Subway Series instant classic.

No place the earnest, jovial — and sweet-singing — Smith would rather be.

“Baseball is my safe haven,” he said.

“This is where I get away from all the stresses of my life.”

Smith hit the go-ahead home run in his first game since tearfully pleading for help combating racial inequality. Pete Alonso also connected and the Mets beat the crosstown Yankees 6-4 in the opener of a doubleheader.

Pinch-hitter Amed Rosario then hit a walk-off, two-run homer to lift the Mets to a 4-3 victory in the nightcap — a bizarre scene in the Bronx, where the Yankees batted first as the visiting team in the makeup of a game postponed last weekend.

“We all were extremely happy to just be back on the field and be back playing baseball,” Smith said. “You could just see how guys feel extremely emotional about what happened for me and for my community and stuff like that.

“You could definitely feel (us being) closer knit over the last 24 hours. I think really, yesterday was obviously bigger and more emotional for me and for my community and stuff like that.”

Roundup

**Scherzer strikes out 11 as Nationals cruise past Red Sox**

Associated Press

BOSTON — Juan Soto grew up in the Dominican Republic watching Manny Ramirez play left field in Boston, and the Nationals slugger was looking forward to playing in the shadow of the Green Monster in his first visit to Fenway Park.

Instead, Soto was in the lineup at designated hitter and had to settle for imitating Ramirez at the plate.

Soto and Howie Kendrick hit back-to-back homers in Washington’s five-run third inning, and Max Scherzer struck out 11 to lead the Nationals to a 10-2 victory over the Red Sox on Friday night.

“Juan is a big Manny fan. He was disappointed” he didn’t play the field, Nationals manager Davey Martinez said. “We’ll see. He’ll be back out there tomorrow.”

Scherzer struck out 11 a day after both teams’ games were postponed in the sport’s racial justice awakening, they returned for Jackie Robinson Day, lining up along the baselines before the game to listen to a recorded speech from the player who broke baseball’s color barrier.

Boston’s Jackie Bradley Jr. — the only Black player on the last team in the majors to integrate — delivered the speech for the national anthem, with teammate Alex Verdugo taking a knee beside him.

“I think it was a great day for us to come back and play, and represent him well,” said Josh Harrison, who also homered for Washington. “It allowed us to take a step back and realize why we’re all here. There’s a reason we play together ... because others made the sacrifices.”

Trea Turner and Victor Robles had three hits apiece for Washington.

Rangers 2, Marlins 0: At Miami, Ryan Yarbrough and two relievers combined on a five-hitter, and AL East-leading Tampa Bay won its third game in a row.

Blue Jays 5, Orioles 4 (10): At Buffalo, N.Y., Randal Grichuk hit a two-run homer with two outs in the 10th inning, lifting Toronto to the win.

Reds 6, Cubs 5: Eugenio Suarez and Jesse Winker homered, helping host Cincinnati to its third consecutive victory.

Phillies 7, Braves 4: Scott Kingery hit a three-run homer off Mark Melancon with two outs in the 11th inning and host Philadelphia won its fourth straight.

Brewers 9, Pirates 1: Eric Thames, Michael Perez and Corbin Burnes struck out 10 in six innings to lead host Milwaukee.

White Sox 6, Royals 5: Yasmani Grandal hit his third career doubleheader game-ending home run in the ninth after a defensive miscue as Chicago beat visiting Kansas City.

Indians 14, Cardinals 2: Franmil Reyes homered and drove in five runs, Carlos Santana hit a home run and scored four times and Cleveland routed host St. Louis.

Padres 10, Rockies 4: Eric Hosmer and Wil Myers each contributed four hits as part of San Diego’s 19-hit attack, Ty France had four RBIs, and visiting San Diego overcame an early four-run deficit.

Angels 3, Mariners 2: At Anaheim, Calif., Mike Trout homered, Justin Upton delivered the tiebreaking RBI single in the sixth inning to help Los Angeles win back-to-back games for the second time all season.

Diamondbacks 7, Giants 4: Zac Gallen earned his first win of the season, starting率为. Marte had two hits and two RBIs and host Arizona snapped an eight-game losing streak.
Breakout season?
These second-year players worth watching

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

Jonathan Abram’s physical play and loud talking made him a player Jon Gruden felt would be a tone-setter for the Raiders defense last season. Instead, the rookie safety injured his shoulder in the season opener and didn’t play again last season. Now Abram is one of several second-year players poised for a breakout season in 2020. “You saw one of the examples of how much the energy changes on defense and how he’s really an enforcer out there,” Gruden said. “So, to have him out there for a year-long basis, I feel like that really gives the defense a change of attitude.”

Jon Gruden, Raiders coach on S. Johnathan Abram, who played in only one game last season, making him the Super Bowl quarter- backer Kyler Murray reviving a dormant offense in Arizona and receiver A.J. Brown helping Tennessee reach the AFC title game.

Others played smaller roles, whether it was because of injuries, adjusting to the pro game or other factors. While Abram’s season was cut short because of an injury, Tennessee first-round defensive tackle Jeffrey Simmons started late because of one. The 6-foot-4 lineman was expected to be a top-10 draft pick in 2019 before tearing his left ACL in February, which dropped him 2019 before tearing his left ACL in February, which dropped him to No. 19 overall and the Titans. In March 2020, he felt unable to cut or bend as he was only a part-time player as a rookie, getting on the field for limited time with 5 ½ sacks and 26 quarterback pressures on 203 pass rush opportunities, according to SportsInfo Solutions. With Dont’a Hightower having opted out this season, and Jamie Collins and Kyle Van Noy leaving in free agency, Winovich will have to carry a much bigger load in year two.

New England LB
Chase Winovich

The third-round pick last year was only a part-time player as a rookie, getting on the field for less than one-third of the defensive snaps. But he produced in that limited time with 5 ½ sacks and 26 quarterback pressures on 203 pass rush opportunities, according to SportsInfo Solutions. With Dont’a Hightower having opted out this season, and Jamie Collins and Kyle Van Noy leaving in free agency, Winovich will have to carry a much bigger load in year two.

Green Bay TE
Jace Sternberger

The third-round pick missed more than half of his rookie season with an ankle injury and didn’t catch a single pass in the regular season. He did catch a TD pass in the NFC title game against San Francisco but will be counted on to contribute much more this season after Jimmy Graham left in free agency. With questions at wide receiver behind Davante Adams, quarterback Aaron Rodgers needs another dependable option in the passing game and Sternberger could provide just that.

Miami WR
Preston Williams

After going undrafted a year ago, Williams had 32 catches for 428 yards and three TDs before a knee injury ended his season after eight games. Williams was tied for the NFL lead among rookies in catches and ranked fourth in yards receiving at the time of his injury but he’s recovered now. There should be plenty of opportunities in Miami, especially after Allen Hurns and Albert Wilson both opted out this season.

Buffalo DT Ed Oliver

The No. 9 overall pick had five sacks as part of one of the NFL’s stingiest defenses last season. But Oliver has the potential to be a game-breaker and could emerge as one of the top pass-rushing interior defensive linemen this season.

Arizona CB
Byron Murphy

The top pick in the second round struggled as a rookie, allowing the most TD passes (nine) of any player in 2019, according to SportsInfo Solutions. Murphy could have less pressure this season with Patrick Peterson expected to play all year after being suspended the first six games a year ago. The Cardinals had been hoping to move Murphy into the slot this season but might have to keep him outside after Robert Alford went down with a season-ending injury for the second straight year.

These second-year players poised for a breakout season in 2020. From left, Tennessee Titans’ interior defensive lineman DaQuan Jones said. “I’m just excited for him to come out there fully healthy and do what he does best, be a big, dominant player.”

Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Diontae Johnson showed flashes of brilliance last season as a rookie, making 59 catches for 680 yards and five touchdowns.

as a rookie with 59 catches for 680 yards and five TDs despite substandard quarterback play from Mason Rudolph and Devlin Hodges. With a healthy Ben Rothlisberger this season, Johnson could be the latest star receiver in Pittsburgh drafted after the first round.

Buffalo Bills defensive tackle Ed Oliver, right, had five sacks in his rookie season, but has the potential to be a game-changer.
Kenosha unrest personal to new Denver RB Gordon

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The latest flashpoints in the racial justice movement hit home for Melvin Gordon and the rest of his new teammates.

The veteran running back who joined the Denver Broncos in free agency this spring is a native of Kenosha, Wis., where a Black man was shot in the back seven times by police last weekend and a white teenager shot two protesters in the unrest that followed.

“I was just sad to see, just do so much for the community and to see on TV what’s going on, it was just heartbreaking,” Gordon said Friday when the Broncos returned to practice a day after joining eight other NFL teams in canceling their workout.

Gordon and the rest of his new teammates.

When it was, it was just sad to see, man,” Gordon said.

Safety Justin Simmons, who spoke out during practice Friday in Englewood, Colo. Gordon is from Kenosha, Wis., where protests are taking place in the wake of the shooting of Black resident Jacob Blake.

Broncos safety Justin Simmons said Gordon’s heart-felt speech in front of the team on Thursday really resonated with his new teammates.

“Tennis is such a mental sport, and I guess it makes it way more difficult without fans, because I just imagine playing in the fifth set on Arthur Ashe, night session, way past midnight — and in a normal year, you get so much energy from the fans. They give you so much, all this atmosphere,” said Dominic Thiem, an Austrian seeded No. 2 in New York behind Novak Djokovic and a three-time runner-up at Grand Slam tournaments.

“And now, in an empty stadium, maybe your coach and your team is there. These are the only people,” Thiem said. “That makes it, I guess, very, very lonely. Very, very tough. And that’s going to be a very interesting thing to experience.”

It’ll be particularly unusual at Flushing Meadows, famous for its boisterous crowds who tend to make much more noise than their counterparts at the All England Club or Roland Garros.

Especially during the New York night sessions, where the socializing and imbibing take things to a whole other level.

“There’s a hush when you walk out on Centre Court at Wimbledon. When you walk out at the U.S. Open, there’s an explosion,” said Chris Evert, who won six of her 18 Grand Slam singles titles in New York.

“It’s going to be challenging, mentally, for the players. The ones that can focus, compartmentalize — just manage to remember that they are playing a Grand Slam and the importance of it — will handle it a little bit easier than those that are a little all over the place,” Evert said. “Either way, hopefully it’s a once-in-a-lifetime thing.”

Kenosha unrest personal to new Denver RB Gordon

Silence: Players won’t derive energy from fans

FROM BACK PAGE

And, of course, the fans themselves don’t get to go — while those watching on TV will find it oddly quiet after points and see large swaths of cloth stretched over empty seats.

“I absolutely love playing for people. I absolutely love when people come and enjoy a performance that myself and my opponent are able to put on for them,” said Johanna Konta, a British player seeded ninth in New York.

“But obviously that’s not the reality we have right now.”

She and others got a chance to sample the silence during the Western & Southern Open, a tournament normally played in Ohio but moved to the U.S. Open site this year because of the pandemic.

One benefit players noticed in the week before the U.S. Open: no packs of people to deal with while navigating the tournament grounds.

On court, it was lonely.

“You can hear yourself breathe,” said Kristina Mladenovic, a four-time Grand Slam doubles champion from France.

“But this is better than nothing — than being home on the couch.”

After winning the first sanctioned ATP men’s match since March at the Western & Southern Open, Felix Auger-Aliassime jokingly sent a ball toward his coach in the stands, the way players will offer a souvenir to spectators.

“There is nobody. I feel it, my coach, feels weird,” said Auger-Aliassime, a Canadian seeded 18th for the U.S. Open. “I’m not a fan of it.”

In team sports in empty arenas, such as Major League Baseball, or the NBA, someone wearing the same uniform can offer a pat on the back or words of encouragement.

In tennis, players are on their own out there. No teammates and no coach standing right there on the sideline to suggest a quick adjustment or draw up a play.

“It’s such a mental sport, and I guess it makes it way more difficult without fans, because I just imagine playing in the fifth set on Arthur Ashe, night session, way past midnight — and in a normal year, you get so much energy from the fans. They give you so much, all this atmosphere,” said Dominic Thiem, an Austrian seeded No. 2 in New York behind Novak Djokovic and a three-time runner-up at Grand Slam tournaments.

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Faced with the reality of COVID-19, Grand Slam being played sans fans

One of the enduring images of the 2019 U.S. Open simply will not — could not — happen at the 2020 U.S. Open: Eventual runner-up Daniil Medvedev’s heel turn, goading and taunting the folks in the stands jeering him.

By the end of the tournament, the charismatic Medvedev had won them over, receiving wildly positive support in 23,771-capacity Arthur Ashe Stadium while pushing Rafael Nadal to five sets in a rollicking final.

By Howard Fendrich
Associated Press

Neither those early boos nor late cheers will be heard this year at Flushing Meadows, where the American Grand Slam tournament begins Monday. All spectators were banned from the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, one of several measures meant to protect players and others on-site from getting — or spreading — the coronavirus.

“It’s going to be really sad without the New York crowd,” Medvedev said. “It’s going to be really strange, of course, for us.”

For everyone, really, changing the very fabric of the event.

Players can’t get a welcome boost of energy or, conversely, don’t need to fret about having people rooting against them — or simply the pressure of performing in front of thousands.

Coaches will find it easier to shout something to a player or, conversely, won’t be bothered by kibitzing from a few rows away.

Chair umpires won’t need to plead, “Quiet, please!” or delay starting the serve clock until after post-point noise dies down.

SEE SILENCE ON PAGE 23