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'We're not taking a knee'

Training under pandemic conditions could better prepare soldiers for the big fight

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — Army Sgt. Jason Cho was more concerned about the sweltering heat in the Mojave Desert than the coronavirus, which has forced major changes to his Army National Training Center rotation.

Army and NTC leaders said they have worked hard to ensure that soldiers like Cho would be able to train at Fort Irwin with as little virus-related distraction as possible. They even found a silver lining — some of the changes forced by the pandemic could better prepare the Army to fight a near-peer adversary, like Russia or China, several top leaders said.

As a combat medic with the 1st Infantry Division's headquarters element, Cho was tasked with monitoring the condition of soldiers throughout the September training exercise, including checking for coronavirus symptoms. But nearly two weeks into the rotation, Cho said his main challenge was soldiers' overheating, as temperatures eclipsed 100 degrees.

SEE TRAINING ON PAGE 9

Soldiers wear face coverings Sept. 20 as training at the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin in California continues during the coronavirus pandemic.

COREY DICKSTEIN/Stars and Stripes



House lawmakers grill Pentagon officials over plan to pull US troops from Germany

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The plan for a large-scale U.S. force reduction in Germany remains a work in progress, Pentagon officials said Wednesday as House lawmakers questioned whether the plan to pull 12,000 troops from the country makes fiscal or strategic sense.

"I don't think this plan was particularly

well thought out," Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., said during a House Armed Services Committee hearing on the proposal.

Smith, the chairman of the committee, also blasted Pentagon officials for failing to describe in any detail how and when the push to cut troops in Germany would be implemented.

"We are not getting the level of insight on this decision that we should," he said.

"The level of detail we are getting here is just not acceptable. ... We need to hear better what the hell is going on."

James Anderson, acting undersecretary of defense for policy, and Air Force Lt. Gen. David W. Allvin, the director for strategy, plans, and policy for the Joint Staff, testified Wednesday on the Pentagon effort to move roughly 5,600 troops in Germany to different locations in Europe and about

6,400 others back to the United States. The plan was met with skepticism by several lawmakers who raised concerns about the strategy. Their questions included the high costs of moving large units and the possibility of sparking more aggression in Eastern Europe from Russia.

"It looks like we are pulling back," said Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Ala.

SEE GERMANY ON PAGE 7

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Germany	\$2.444	\$2.658	\$3.106	\$2.669	Azores	--	--	\$3.006 --
Change in price	+0.1 cents	+0.1 cents	-0.3 cents	-1.0 cents	Change in price	--	--	+0.5 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.334	\$3.550	\$3.109	Belgium	--	Numbers not received before press time	
Change in price	--	+1.4 cents	+1.2 cents	+2.0 cents	Change in price	--	--	
U.K.	--	\$2.757	\$3.005	\$2.568	Turkey	--	--	\$2.926 \$3.429*
Change in price	--	+0.1 cents	-0.5 cents	-1.0 cents	Change in price	--	--	+1.3 cents +1.0 cents

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Japan	--	\$2.899	--	\$2.459	South Korea	\$2.249	--	\$2.909 \$2.469
Change in price	--	No change	--	-1.0 cents	Change in price	--	--	-1.0 cents -1.0 cents
Okinawa	No change	--	--	\$2.459	Guam	\$2.249**	\$2.659	\$2.909
Change in price	\$2.239	--	--	-1.0 cents	Change in price	-1.0 cents	No change	No change

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Oct. 2-8

EXCHANGE RATES

	Rate		Rate
Military rates		Switzerland (Franc)	0.9180
Euro costs (Oct. 2)	\$1.15	Thailand (Baht)	31.59
Dollar buys (Oct. 2)	60.8290	Turkey (Lira)	7.754
British pound (Oct. 2)	\$1.27		
Japanese yen (Oct. 2)	103.00		
South Korean won (Oct. 2)	1,141.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3772		
British pound	\$1.2875		
Canada (Dollar)	1.2298		
China (Yuan)	6.7903		
Denmark (Krone)	6.3373		
Egypt (Pound)	15.1513		
Euro	\$1.1739/0.8519		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7503		
Hungary (Forint)	306.65		
Israel (Shekel)	3.4272		
Japan (Yen)	105.68		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3963		
Norway (Krone)	9.3160		
Philippines (Peso)	48.48		
Poland (Zloty)	3.83		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7510		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3626		
South Korea (Won)	1,163.41		

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.10
30-year bond	1.46

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

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



MILITARY

Report outlines Russian military rebound

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Russian military is more capable than at any time since the end of the Cold War, the result of an effort to produce a more agile force, a new study found.

Though significantly smaller than their Soviet predecessors, these forces are better equipped, with professional personnel increasingly prevalent," the International Institute for Strategic Studies said in its latest assessment of the Russian military.

The report, released Wednesday, described a military that has rebounded from the neglect of the 1990s, when Russia was

in disarray after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Moscow also has benefited from lessons learned during its brief war with Georgia in 2008, which exposed command and control and logistical shortcomings, the IISS report said.

While the Russians easily defeated the much smaller Georgian force, Moscow's "New Look" reform program was launched to make improvements "in the wake of the armed forces' poor performance," the report said.

Those reforms laid the foundations for the current Russian military, which is being used to extend Moscow's influence beyond its borders.

"Russia's annexation of Crimea, its involvement in the war in eastern Ukraine and its decisive intervention in the Syrian civil war exemplify growing military confidence and capability," the report said.

Russia's ground forces have modernized by fielding the Iskander short-range ballistic-missile system and new self-propelled artillery. Combined with new command-and-control networks and drones, Russia's forces can "find, fix and strike adversary formations at greater range than before," the report said.

Russia has also upgraded its Navy, including with more modern submarines, the report said.

While smaller than during the Soviet

era, the air force has advanced since the first and second wars in Chechnya and in the short Georgia campaign, which exposed gaps in equipment and training. In 2015, air power improvements were on display in Syria with modernized fighters, the report said.

However, it's unclear if Russia's armed forces can maintain their progress, given budget constraints.

"Nonetheless, when combined with Moscow's more assertive foreign policy, Russia's armed forces in 2020 constitute a capability that should not be ignored," the IISS report said.

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Air Force patch with Reaper drone over China vexes Beijing

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

An Air Force patch depicting an MQ-9 Reaper drone flying over China has angered state media in the communist country.

The patch, which also shows a skeletal Grim Reaper equipped with his traditional scythe, was worn by airmen participating in Agile Reaper, an exercise last month involving three of the drones deployed to Naval Station Point Mugu, Calif., from Holloman Air Force Base, N.M.

A photograph of airmen wearing the patch, which includes an outline of a map of China, appeared in the Sept. 24 edition of Air Force Magazine, provoking an angry response from Chinese state media.

"This is an extremely arrogant provocation," the Global Times newspaper said in an article Tuesday. "This is a move to further stir hostilities between Chinese and American societies and an extortion against China. The US military is using the drones and patches to stimulate the imagination and create images of China and the US going to war."

The newspaper on Sept. 19 posted a video issued by the Chinese air force that showed nuclear-capable H-6 bombers carrying out a simulated attack on what appears to be Andersen Air Force Base on Guam.

The fact that the U.S. military

is preparing to deter and fight a near-peer adversary such as China or Russia is no secret.

"Long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities for the Department [of Defense], and require both increased and sustained investment, because of the magnitude of the threats they pose to U.S. security and prosperity today, and the potential for those threats to increase in the future," the 2018 National Defense Strategy states.

Patches depicting potential adversaries have a history in the Air Force.

As recently as February, members of the 18th Aggressor Squadron out of Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, wore red and black patches showing a Soviet-era hammer and sickle over a palm tree while participating in the Cope North drills on Guam.

The aggressors' mission involves playing the role of enemy air forces during training.

"China will shoot down incoming US warplanes, no matter they are unmanned or manned," the Global Times warned Tuesday. "If those planes cause actual damage to Chinese islands and reefs, we will strike the platforms and bases from which those planes take off."

If Chinese-held islands in disputed South China Sea territory are attacked they will be "turned into a fully operational military



COLLETTE BROOKS/U.S. Air Force

Senior Airman Jorge Garcia communicates with aircrew while launching an MQ-9 Reaper during Exercise Agile Reaper at Naval Air Station Point Mugu, Calif., on Sept. 15.

base," the newspaper reported without noting that China has already built several military facilities in the contested waters.

China's territorial expansion in the region has spurred pushback from the U.S. Navy, which frequently conducts freedom-of-navigation patrols there. Experts have warned that an incident in the contested waterway could spark conflict.

The Reapers, which carry long-range radar and can provide commanders with full-motion video of the sea below, conducted close air

support, search and rescue, maritime interdiction, strike coordination and reconnaissance and surveillance during last month's exercise.

The drones, made by General Atomics of San Diego, can carry 3,000 pounds of ordnance and first saw combat in Afghanistan in 2007 and Iraq the following year. They've conducted numerous missions there and in other parts of the Middle East and Africa.

Their capabilities could come in handy in a place such as the

South China Sea, according to the commander of the drones involved in Agile Reaper, Lt. Col. Brian Davis, who leads the 29th Attack Squadron at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M.

"We are just as capable [at sea] without changing our weapons in any way," he said Sept. 21. "I think you are going to see the MQ-9 utilized in other locations. California is a great step off point to some other locations further to the west."

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Bill introduced to rename Houston post office to honor Spc. Guillen

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Legislation to rename a Houston post office after slain Fort Hood soldier Spc. Vanessa Guillen was introduced in the House on Wednesday, the same day that would have been the soldier's 21st birthday.

Rep. Sylvia Garcia, D-Texas, filed the

legislation to rename the post office in south Houston in honor Guillen, a native of the city. Garcia represents the area.

From age 12, Guillen told her father that she dreamed of serving in the Army, according to a news release from Garcia's office. After graduating from César Chávez E. High School, she enlisted in the Army and trained as a small arms/artillery

repairer.

Fort Hood was the soldier's only duty station. She was killed April 22 by a fellow soldier. It took Army investigators more than two months to find her body about 20 miles from the base.

The search for Guillen captured international media attention and has led to a number of investigations into Fort Hood

and the Army. Subpanels of the House Committees on Oversight and Reform and Armed Services have an ongoing joint investigation into the base's policies and practices, with a focus on Guillen and six other soldiers who died this year while stationed at Fort Hood.

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WAR/MILITARY



BRANDEN YAMADA/U.S. Air Force

Col. Jesse Friedel, commander of the 35th Fighter Wing, receives his annual flu shot at Misawa Air Base, Japan, on Wednesday.

More US bases in Japan gear up to give out flu vaccinations

By ERICA EARL
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Yokosuka Naval Base, home of the U.S. 7th Fleet in Japan, will soon have flu shots available for infants and toddlers in families affiliated with the installation.

Children between the ages of 6 months and 35 months may receive the vaccinations from Oct. 13 through Oct. 16 at the naval hospital auditorium from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., according to a schedule posted Thursday to the base Facebook page.

Yokosuka has yet to announce the arrival of flu vaccines for adults.

Misawa Air Base, in northern Japan, also has a flu vaccine, according to a Facebook post Wednesday. The base medical center, however, has not yet announced when it will be available or if the shots are exclusively for adults or include children as well.

"Be on the lookout for updates on your unit times and dates to get yours!" the post states.

U.S. Army Garrison Japan outside central Tokyo has announced dates for flu shots for service members, family members and Defense Department civilians, and nearby Yokota Air Base has announced its vaccination schedule for infants and toddlers.

Military medical authorities have stressed the importance of a flu vaccination during the coronavirus pandemic as one way to reduce a demand for health care at U.S. bases during the winter.

September and October are optimal months for flu vaccinations; however, they are useful anytime the flu is circulating, even as late as January and February, according to the CDC.

This year, the vaccines will target four viral strains: H1N1, H3N2, Victoria lineage and Yamagata lineage, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

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At least 6 missiles intercepted targeting airport in northern Iraq

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — At least six missiles targeting Irbil international airport in northern Iraq were intercepted Wednesday evening, a statement from the Kurdish Interior Ministry said, as diplomatic tensions between Washington and Baghdad mounted over a spate of rocket attacks targeting the U.S. presence.

The U.S.-led coalition maintains a troop presence on a base inside the airport. The recent attacks have, until now, exclusively targeted the heavily fortified Green Zone, the seat of the Baghdad government, and the capital's airport. Roadside bombs have also routinely targeted convoys carrying materials for the U.S.-led coalition forces.

According to the statement, the missiles were intercepted at 8:30 p.m. and did not cause any major damage. Two Kurdish officials said one of the rockets hit the headquarters of an Iranian-Kurdish opposition party banned in Iran. The officials requested anonymity in line with regulations.

The statement said the rockets were fired from a pickup truck near Bartella, south of Irbil in Ninevah province, which are areas under the purview of Brigade 30 of the Popular Mobilization Forces. The brigade is composed of ethnic Shabak militiamen.

Iraq's military said the perpetrators were "terrorist groups," and that one rocket had landed close to Hasarvham camp for the internally displaced.

The frequency of the attacks

led to U.S. threats last week to close its Baghdad embassy unless decisive action was taken to rein in Shiite militias suspected of launching the attacks. Iraq's foreign minister on Wednesday said the government was taking measures to consolidate security in the Green Zone and airport.

The attack in Irbil, a rare target for rockets, is considered to be a serious escalation by Iraqi officials.

Kurdish officials, and former Finance Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, said the incident was "yet another escalation" to undermine security in the country by "the same groups who are attacking the U.S. embassy in Baghdad and its convoys. Action is needed to stop it."

US ends language training program for Central Asia

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A military program that gave troops advising and language training in an effort to develop cultural experts in Central Asia shut down Wednesday, the Pentagon said.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program closed after more than a decade of training advisers in languages such as Dari, Pashto or Urdu, said Richard Osial, spokesman for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The last "AfPak Hands" have left Afghanistan and Pakistan, Osial said in an email this week. The decision to sunset the program Sept. 30 had been approved last year under Gen. Joseph Dunford Jr., former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The military is attempting to provide AfPak Hand personnel with a "posting of choice" within their service after leaving the program, Osial said, adding that there is no effort to move personnel to the State Department or any other agency.

The AfPak Hands program trained about 1,000 troops from different services to be advisers on four-year commitments, with overseas rotations aimed at bolstering counterinsurgency efforts.

Two U.S. Air Force officers gave their lives while serving in the program. Lt. Col. Frank Bryant was killed in a mass shooting at Kabul's airport by an Afghan pilot in 2011, and Lt. Col. Darin Loftis was shot in the back and killed by a radicalized Afghan government worker in 2012.

Some who joined the AfPak program said they believed troops speaking local languages and more closely advising partners could help turn the tide in

the war.

At its inception, the initiative reflected "the notion that peace in Central Asia will not likely be achieved down the barrel of a gun, but rather through the lens of understanding," said retired Adm. James Stavridis, who oversaw operations in Afghanistan as NATO's supreme allied commander from 2009 to 2013.

But Hands found their careers stunted by their participation as they missed chances at reaching critical promotion milestones during their four years in the program, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction said last year.

Other AfPak Hands told Stars and Stripes that while they were motivated to advise their local partners, they often served under officers who distrusted them or doubted their uncommon mission.

"The institutional bureaucracy of the military promotion system does not support the survival of programs like the (AfPak) Hands," retired Navy Capt. James Muir said last year. Muir oversaw the in-country office from 2010 to 2012 that managed the program in Afghanistan.

The end of the program comes as the U.S. looks to end its war in Afghanistan, which will enter its 20th year next week.

U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan dropped from around 13,000 to below 9,000 service members following a February deal with the Taliban. Pentagon officials expect troop strength to fall to between 4,000 and 5,000 by the end of November, according to congressional testimony last month.

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Bomber kills at least 9 at checkpoint in Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Afghan official said at least nine people, including four civilians, were killed when a suicide car bomber attacked a military checkpoint in southern Afghanistan.

Omer Zwak, a spokesman for the provincial government in Helmand, said Thursday that a small child and three security personnel were wounded in the late Wednesday night attack in Nahri Sarah district.

Zwak said civilians were in a vehicle passing by when the at-

tacker targeted the checkpoint. Two women were among those killed.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but Taliban insurgents are in control of most part of Helmand province.

The violence comes even as Taliban leaders and Afghan government-appointed negotiators are holding historic peace talks in Qatar, a Mideast country where the Taliban set up a political office after they were toppled from power in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan.

PACIFIC

Global Hawk airmen return to Guam as a squadron

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Air Force's newest RQ-4 Global Hawk squadron is soon headed for Guam after completing a four-month deployment in Japan.

The 4th Reconnaissance Squadron, which will return to Andersen Air Force Base sometime next week, operated five of the United States' largest unmanned aircraft from the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo over summer.

The unit started its deployment as Detachment 1 of the 319th Operations Group, but finished it as a squadron due to its increased size after adding maintenance airmen to take over jobs that had been done by civilians, said squadron commander Lt. Col. Ben Craycraft.

The squadron traces its lineage to the 4th Observation Squadron of World War II. It was last active in Afghanistan in 2014, when it flew MC-12 Liberty aircraft.

On Wednesday, Craycraft watched airmen clear the unit's supplies out of one of a pair of old hangars that once housed C-9A Nightingale medevac planes at Yokota. He was wearing the squadron's new patch, which fea-

tures a crow, a bird that is ubiquitous in the Japanese capital.

"We saw a crow outside the same day we transitioned to become a squadron," he said.

The unit deployed to Yokota with a single "cockpit," a metal box that looks like a shipping container where pilots control the drones.

"We control the airplane for about 200 miles and then hand off to the main operating bases," Craycraft said, referring to Beale Air Force Base, Calif., and Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., where drone operators fly the Global Hawks remotely during missions.

According to the aircraft's manufacturer, Northrop Grumman, the Global Hawk flies at 60,000 feet and has a line of sight to targets more than 340 miles away. The exact range of the aircraft's cameras and sensors is classified, but a Global Hawk flying near the Korean Demilitarized Zone, for example, could see well beyond the Yalu River that marks North Korea's border with China.

The biggest change that happened when the unit became a squadron was having airmen maintain the aircraft, a job that was done by civilian contractors on Guam, Craycraft said.

The squadron's 36 maintainers spent six months training for their new jobs before arriving in Japan, according to Global Hawk crew chief Master Sgt. Kevin Woodfill, 34, of Aztec, N.M.

"We had a handful of experienced guys from other Global Hawk bases come out ... [but] at Yokota, it was the first time a lot of these people had touched these aircraft," he said Thursday.

Most of the drone maintenance involves computers, but there is still basic aviation maintenance involved, said the former C-130 Hercules and F-15 Eagle mechanic who worked on MQ-9 Reaper drones before joining the Global Hawk unit.

It takes four or five people on the flight line to generate an RQ-4 sortie, he said.

"They are flying computers, so they are pretty maintenance intensive," he said of the drones. "You can't just start them up and go. There are a lot of systems that need to be checked."

Guam-based Global Hawks, which recently got upgraded signals intelligence equipment, have been deploying to Japan during summer to avoid typhoons since 2014. The aircraft have flown out of either Misawa Air Base, in northeast Japan, or Yokota.



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Col. Ben Craycraft, commander of the 4th Reconnaissance Squadron, shows off a new patch depicting a crow at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Wednesday.

Craycraft said Tokyo, however, which so far hasn't been hit by typhoons this year, is a better location for the mission than Misawa.

At Misawa, the drones share airspace with U.S. and Japanese fighter jets and commercial planes. In Tokyo, however, the drones have little impact on local operations, he said.

This year's mission in Japan was twice as long as last year's and involved twice as many sorties,

Craycraft added.

The drone operators got on well with members of Yokota's 374th Airlift Wing, which flies conventional planes, including the C-130J Super Hercules, he said.

"They give me a lot of stick about not being a real pilot, but I used to fly the C-130, so I have some street cred with them," he said.

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MILITARY

Innovation and inventors' club opens at Yokota

BY ERICA EARL
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Visitors to a makeshift lab at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo tested a 3D printer, augmented reality goggles and design software at the recent soft opening for the YokoWex Dojo.

An innovators' and inventors' clubhouse of sorts, the lab is on target for a formal opening in January at Yokota, the group's founder, Air Force Staff Sgt. Gerard Arceneaux, said in an interview Sept. 16.

YokoWex Dojo will be available to service members and Defense Department civilians to tinker and brainstorm ideas that improve the armed forces and turn "what ifs" into reality, Arceneaux said.

"The Dojo is for people with good ideas who don't quite know how to execute them," he said. "We want to welcome people with great ideas that may still be half-baked to decide how we can pool our resources to help them."

As a way of marketing YokoWex Dojo and introducing the community to the type of problem-solving products it can spur, the volunteers designed and produced "COVID-Keys," small plastic tools that can be used to press buttons, pull open doors and cabinets, or hook onto latches to mitigate the spread of viruses by limiting the need to physically touch objects. COVID-19 is the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

YokoWex members sent 150 of the keys to service members and families on base at random, along with 30 golden keys granting access to the Dojo lab's Sept. 25 soft opening to preview the equipment and resources that will be available to those interested in joining.

While the space, dubbed the Dojo Lab, in Building 400 cur-

rently doesn't have much equipment beyond a 3D printer, white board and a few computers, Arceneaux said its heart lies in the dialogue and potential for new projects.

"It's not just about using a 3D printer," he said. "It's whole mission is to encourage people to connect to find solutions." Lt. Col. Toby Evans, the 374th Air-lift Wing innovation officer and a mentor for the YokoWex Dojo, said the club, also called a "spark cell," is a branch of Air Force Works, stylized as AFWERX, a service-wide initiative created in 2017 to encourage airmen to practice creative problem solving.

Arceneaux and Evans began planning for the YokoWex Dojo launch in February. It is run by 10 volunteers, including service members, DOD civilian employees and Japan Air Self-Defense Force personnel.

While the Dojo Lab undergoes renovations prior to its official opening in January, the club is offering an online inventor and innovator competition called YokoShowdown from Monday through Nov. 20.

YokoShowdown will be hosted on the website IdeaScale. The products, prototypes or ideas with the most votes will be fine-tuned at the Dojo Lab and pitched to senior leaders at the 374th Air-lift Wing, Evans said.

"It's like Shark Tank for the Air Force," he said.

Any service member, family member or DOD civilian is invited to submit an entry, as long as the concept is geared toward improving life at Yokota, or in the Air Force as a whole.

Money for the YokoWex Dojo and the YokoShowdown comes from Air Force Squadron Innovation Funds, set aside in 2018 to encourage units to engage in think tanks and vocalize how they would like to improve the work climate, according to the



ERICA EARL/Stars and Stripes



Above: The chief technology officer for YokoWex, Air Force Master Sgt. Ken Martin, demonstrates the innovation lab's 3D printer at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Sept. 25. Left: Kayoko Seta, 374th Contracting Squadron contracting specialist, experiences augmented reality for the first time in the newly-opened YokoWex innovation lab.

TAYLOR WORKMAN
U.S. Air Force

AFWERX website.

Evans said that while many people think of technology when the term "innovation" is brought up, the online contest and lab will be a hub to prototype and test ideas of all kinds.

While the lab won't be completely finished until January, Arceneaux said he can show the in-progress space to interested participants prior to the official opening.

The only stipulation, he said, is that they must use the space for a specific idea that benefits that Yokota community, not a private interest project or a private business venture.

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TAYLOR WORKMAN/U.S. Air Force

Finley Wilson, son of Master Sgt. Daniel Wilson, plays with a 3D printed CV-22 Osprey in the lab.

Airmen can now grow their hair longer under appearance revision

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is allowing both male and female airmen to wear their hair a bit longer.

The service approved a revision to its dress and personal appearance regulations on Sept. 15, the latest in a series of changes made in effort to "enhance inclusiveness" while at the same time maintaining professional standards, the Air Force said in a news release Tuesday.

Effective immediately, men are now

allowed to have hair 2 inches long from their scalp, a "hair bulk" that is ¼ inch longer than previously allowed.

The maximum length of women's hair has been increased from 3½ inches to 4 inches.

In an additional change, men can have one front-to-back straight-line part — cut, clipped or shaved — on either side of their head above the temple. The part cannot be slanted or curved or exceed 4 inches in length or ¼ inch in width.

The Air Force also clarified that airmen can dye their hair any natural color, re-

gardless the color of their own natural hair. It defines those colors as brown, blonde, brunette, natural red, black and gray.

The service had previously announced changes to its policy regarding shaving waivers due to razor bumps, a condition common among Black men. In July, the Air Force revised its appearance regulations to remove the term "faddish" in regard to issues of complexion after concluding it was subjective language.

"As we listened to Airmen and Space Professionals, we reviewed our policies and identified language in our dress and

appearance instruction that was problematic for certain groups," Lisa Truesdale, Air Force deputy director of military force management policy, said in a July statement as the Air Force began the series of revisions.

"Ensuring inclusive language in our policies is one of the first steps in creating a more inclusive culture where all uniformed members can thrive and maximize their fullest potential," she said.

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MILITARY

‘We’re going to adapt and we’re going to win’

On Okinawa, pandemic attack plan made with military precision

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Seaman Justin Funder remained focused on his phone and computer screen on a recent quiet morning inside the coronavirus response center at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa.

The 25-year-old hospitalman from St. Cloud, Minn., works in the COVID Cell, named for COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus. At the start of the pandemic, cell members were responsible for all things, from fielding phone calls and taking down service member information to administering on-site tests and tracing the close contacts of those who tested positive.

As the spread peaked to hundreds of cases at U.S. bases on Okinawa over the summer, the number of personnel in the cell also multiplied. Funder was responsible for fewer tasks, but his days were much busier.

“I think the first was frightening, but then it just became proper procedure,” he told Stars and Stripes in between phone calls Sept. 4. “We just knew that we had to do it.”

Today Funder still stands watch but breathes easier. As of Wednesday, the Marines had reported just four active coronavirus cases among its service members, civilian employees and family members on the island. The Corps last announced a new patient on Okinawa on Sept. 26.

Though the Marines admitted missteps battling the summer coronavirus wave, they say they’ve built infrastructure sufficient enough to effectively handle a winter spike if it occurs. They made slight adjustments to their procedures and “remain ready” to surmount effort to beat back the virus, wrote Maj. Kenneth Kunze, spokesman for Marine Corps Installations Pacific, in a Sept. 21 email response to questions from Stars and Stripes.

Funder said the U.S. military’s first responders are “ready.”

“I feel like we have a very good handle on everything,” he said.

The pandemic had just reached the island when U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa in March turned its annual disaster response exercise into one focused on the virus.

“We knew the impact a potential endemic could have,” the chief readiness officer for U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, Navy Cmdr. Jeffrey Ricks, told Stars and Stripes on Aug. 27.

Ricks is also deputy commander of Task Force Safeguard, launched by the III Marine Expeditionary Force in mid-July to align Marine Corps efforts



PHOTOS BY MATT BURKE/Stars and Stripes

Seaman Justin Funder, 25, a hospitalman from St. Cloud, Minn., takes a call inside the COVID Cell at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, on Sept. 4.



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Anthony Ohlson, a hospitalman with the 3rd Medical Battalion, tests a DNA sample for the coronavirus at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, on Sept. 9.

to combat the virus across the Pacific.

“We ended up executing a pandemic drill for the hospital, focusing primarily on a large surge of patients,” he said.

At the same time, Ricks said, the hospital teamed up with III Marine Expeditionary Force, the 18th Wing and 18th Medical Group at Kadena Air Base and with Army and Navy units on the island. From that, the Joint COVID-19 Response Center was born.

Coordinated response

The joint response center launched in April in a building behind the hospital at Camp Foster. It is one of four major organizations, along with the COVID Cell, Task Force Safeguard and Task Force Permanent Change of Station, created to combat the virus’ spread on Okinawa.

The center’s mission is to fuse all the contact tracing by all four service branches on the island, so planners know where to focus testing efforts, Marine Col. Eric Hamstra said. He is the officer

in charge for the Joint COVID-19 Response Center and Task Force Safeguard’s commander.

The COVID Cell, in a detached building near the hospital, is an extension of the response center and is also home to the dispatchers for the Okinawa-wide COVID Care Line, a 24/7 coronavirus hotline.

The first call for anyone with coronavirus symptoms, or who believes they were exposed to the virus, is to the COVID Care Line. The caller is then forwarded to COVID Cell, where people like Funder arrange for testing at the hospital’s respiratory clinic or drive-through testing site.

The samples are sent to a naval hospital lab where Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Anthony Ohlson, 41, of Huntsville, Texas, a hospitalman from the 3rd Medical Battalion, opens the vials under a glass shield for DNA testing. Results are typically available in 45 minutes.

Samples from mass tests — of entire units, for example — are sent to South Korea for analysis.

The Joint COVID-19 Response Center is notified of positive tests,

and COVID Cell contact tracers are dispatched to investigate any potential spread, Funder said.

Local officials on Okinawa are kept apprised with daily phone calls, Hamstra said.

If the person who tests positive arrived for a permanent change of station, Task Force PCS arranges their mandatory 14-day isolation period, also known as restriction of movement, Kunze wrote by email Sept. 14. U.S. Forces Japan requires all inbound personnel or those who travel outside Japan to quarantine for 14 days and test negative before exiting.

First infection

The virus first hit Okinawa on Feb. 14 when a female taxi driver in her 60s tested positive, Okinawa prefectural officials said. By the end of April, the spread was held to 143 local cases and two airmen and a visiting relative at Kadena.

Then the virus appeared to vanish. Neither Okinawa prefecture nor the U.S. military reported any cases through May and June. Restrictions on U.S. personnel were eased, and life took a turn toward normal.

On July 1, the Marines at Camp McTureous reported their first positive test result. Six days later, personnel at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma were ordered to shelter in place after several people there tested positive. A day later, Camp Hansen went into lockdown to allow contact tracing and cleaning as more cases emerged.

As the number of infections grew daily by six to sometimes more than 12, the Marines raised the coronavirus risk level from moderate to substantial, or Health Protection Condition-Charlie, and reimposed restrictions on travel and off-base activities.

They also launched an “aggressive” test and trace plan, in which entire units and barracks

were quarantined and tested, Marine spokesman Kunze wrote. The service also started taking temperatures around their installations and requiring entry logs for many buildings, along with individual contact-tracing logs, frequent hand washing and masks.

The Marines tested thousands of people, Kunze said, resulting in 362 positive results since July 1. At the two largest clusters, tests yielded 115 cases at MCAS Futenma and 169 at Camp Hansen.

Nearly two-thirds of all cases were asymptomatic, Kunze wrote. Only one person was hospitalized overnight as a precaution.

Ohlson, of the 3rd Medical Battalion, arrived at the hospital July 10 to begin analyzing test samples. Since then, he’s done close to 300 tests.

“During a peak eight-hour shift, I would have 30 samples,” he said as the analyzer hummed in the background. “It was pretty much nonstop.”

As the second wave intensified, alarms were raised over practices contributing to the spread.

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki at a July 11 press conference voiced concerns over the military’s preparedness and demanded U.S. officials protect the general public from the virus spreading off base.

The Japanese defense minister at the time, Taro Kono, on July 14 pointed out that some newly arrived Marines and their families were serving their quarantine at an off-base hotel the U.S. military rented for that purpose.

On social media, reports flared that the clusters on MCAS Futenma and Camp Hansen erupted following beach parties and unauthorized trips to bars and nightclubs over Fourth of July weekend.

However, investigators could trace none of the cluster cases to parties, even by offering amnesty for information, Kunze wrote.

Instead, the Marine Corps took responsibility for the outbreak for permitting inbound personnel on the island’s off-base hotel. Program to exit quarantine without being tested, provided they showed no symptoms. Mandatory exit testing was instituted in late July by U.S. Forces Japan.

Inbound personnel were quarantined on Marine installations instead of the off-base hotel.

Kunze said fighting coronavirus took a massive logistics effort that improved over time, but it was “exceptional since the beginning.”

By Sept. 8, neither MCAS Futenma nor Hansen had any coronavirus patients, Kunze said.

“You don’t get to pick your war,” Hamstra said. “And you go to war with what you have at hand, and in that mindset, that the entire U.S. military has, we’re going to adapt and we’re going to win. I don’t think any of us would have anticipated that, but I guarantee every Marine out there is ready to excel in this situation.”

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MILITARY

Training: Pandemic makes complicated task even more difficult

FROM FRONT PAGE

"The extreme heat, sleeping outside, the winds ... Dealing with those heat injuries has been keeping us pretty busy," said Cho, wearing an Army green face covering — a requirement for the nearly 5,000 soldiers participating in the September NTC rotation.

The pandemic has made a complicated task — moving thousands of troops and hundreds of vehicles around the country to a single training post in the middle of the desert — even more difficult. The worry of spreading the coronavirus, as it swept across American states in the spring, forced Army officials to shut down NTC and its two sister combat training centers in Louisiana and Germany in mid-March.

At Fort Irwin, before reopening the post in July after missing two rotations, officials had to answer a challenging question: How do you move 5,000 soldiers on and off the installation without spreading the virus between those rotational forces and the post's own population of troops, family members and civilian workers?

The answer, according to Brig. Gen. David Lesperance, the senior commander for Fort Irwin and NTC, was to make some policies changes, restrict access to the post's training areas, and rethink how soldiers flow on and off for training.

Instead of holding thousands of incoming and outgoing soldiers in one location as NTC rotational units have done for years, smaller groups of soldiers now enter and exit NTC's 775,000-acre training area — known as "the Box" — from separate locations, Lesperance said.

Soldiers entering training no longer stage together outside the Box for several days. Instead, they gear up as soon as their vehicles and supplies arrive, enter the training range and begin to operate in a much more expeditionary fashion, he said. It is the way top Army leaders envision deploying forces into remote locations if a large-scale war were to break out against a force with similar firepower.

The Army must train

Gen. Joseph Martin, the Army's vice chief of staff, and Army Undersecretary James McPherson visited NTC last month to see how training at the critical post looked like during a pandemic. They came to observe the 1st Infantry Division headquarters rotation, an unusual training scenario built around the division headquarters instead of a brigade combat team, as the majority of combat training centers rotations have been.

The operational pause at the outset of the pandemic caused training issues for the Army, leaving some units at lower combat readiness levels than leaders would prefer. It was critical that the Army reopen training centers quickly and safely so soldiers and their units could get the strengthening repetitions they required to



A soldier with the Army's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment enters an armored vehicle at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., on Sept. 20.

PHOTOS BY COREY DICKSTEIN/Stars and Stripes

be prepared to fight, Martin said.

"That's what our country expects of us, regardless of circumstances," said Martin, who visited NTC for the first time since leaving the installation as its top commander in 2016. "America cannot afford for us to do that. They expect us to operate regardless of how degraded the environment may be."

Russia, China and other adversaries watch the U.S. military closely, including whether its soldiers are conducting the kind of training they can only accomplish at NTC.

"That's not lost on either of our near-peer competitors, [who say], 'Wow. The U.S. Army's back to doing that large-scale training again,'" said McPherson, who was visiting Fort Irwin for the first time.

Calling it a "huge black eye," McPherson highlighted the U.S. military's most high-profile pandemic-related incident — the coronavirus outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier, which began in March. The incident sidelined the ship for two months as more than 1,000 sailors contracted the virus, and one died from complications. That episode, which triggered the removal of senior officials from the ship's captain to the Navy secretary, resulted in McPherson briefly serving as acting Navy secretary before he returned to his job as Army undersecretary.

"We, the Army, have now responded with a large NTC training evolution," McPherson said Sept. 20 after leaving Fort Irwin. "That's sending a message to [adversaries] as well: The Army's training, and we're not taking a knee ... even in a worldwide pandemic. We're training to defeat you. That's the message we're sending."

Since returning soldiers to the Box at NTC, the Army has completed three rotations, including a National Guard brigade rotation that saw troops come to Fort Irwin from 27 states.

Soldiers have tested positive for the virus during training ro-

tations, but they have not sparked any significant outbreak, said Lesperance, the post's top commander. There have been no indications that rotational soldiers have infected any troops stationed at Fort Irwin, he said.

Those who have tested positive — the Army declined to disclose how many cases it has seen among either soldiers stationed at Fort Irwin or among its rotating training forces, citing Pentagon policy — have been immediately removed from the Box and quarantined. An Army spokesman described "a few" such cases during the September rotation for the 1st Infantry Division.

"All the safety protocols that we planned for, and that we've executed, have worked," Lesperance said. "I feel very confident that we'll be able to continue to train as our Army requires us to do."

A leadership crucible

The training scenario for the September rotation included elements the Army would face in a full-spectrum fight in several domains — land, air, space and cyberspace. Fort Irwin's dedicated opposing force, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, challenged the soldiers on the ground from the 1st Infantry Division headquarters and other units subordinate to the division based at Fort Riley, Kan. The regiment used technology and tactics meant to resemble current capabilities of near-peer rivals, which 11th ACR soldiers have mastered through repeated fights with rotational units. The opposing force simulated direct artillery and helicopter strikes, ground attacks and even chemical attacks to test the capabilities of the 1st Infantry Division soldiers on the ground.

Like other NTC rotations, the training included live-fire tests, allowing commanders to coordinate operations from their mobile command centers set up — and repeatedly moved — across the desert training grounds. All the while, NTC-based obser-



Soldiers with the Army's 1st Infantry Division train during a rotation at the National Training Center on Sept. 19.

coach-trainers — soldiers tasked with teaching and guiding the deployed soldiers — critiqued their choices and execution.

Army leaders bill NTC as a leadership crucible, designed to test decision-makers' abilities to coordinate a fight or respond to aggression under harsh, unforgiving conditions. It is not unusual for rotational forces to take a beating from the opposition force, but it helps them learn from their mistakes when lives are not at risk.

"This is how we learn in these [combat training center] rotations," the Army vice chief said. "They reveal things that if you had otherwise not done them, you would learn them in the wrong place — when you're at risk of being struck by the enemy."

That was a lesson Capt. Sean McQuade and other soldiers learned quickly during the training. McQuade, an intelligence officer on the 1st Infantry Division headquarters staff, said his unit experienced a mass casualty in a simulated gas attack just one day before the visit by Martin and McPherson.

McQuade managed to survive the attack, getting his gas mask on and sealed in time, he said. The rotation taught him to stick with the fundamental aspects of watchfighting that he has been taught since he was a second lieutenant more than five years ago.

"You're in an uncomfortable environment with the desert ... but ultimately your training kicks in, you survive the [gas] attack and you continue to the next day. In my case, that is giving an update on the enemy situation, and life goes on," he said. "Sure it's uncomfortable [at NTC], not as sanitary as Fort Riley would be based at home, but, ultimately, it's really setting the conditions for us to be ready for when we deploy, be it to Poland, somewhere else in Europe or another operational environment."

Another lesson the soldiers quickly learned was that they cannot rely on their key communications gear to function properly in a harsh environment. Often that meant using old-fashioned analog methods of tracking the battle picture.

"You have to go back to ... get out your map, plot these [locations]," McQuade said. "We have

to continue the mission because you can bet that in a peer-on-peer fight, we're going to have degraded communications."

A 'brilliant' solution

McQuade, on his first rotation to NTC, said it was "a little exciting" to be among the Army's first units training during the pandemic.

There were, of course, the annoyances: the face masks, the temperature checks each time soldiers entered the division's main command center and the constant reminders to avoid being in groups. But he was also intrigued by the real-world impact the pandemic was having on the deployment.

"It really is interesting to see when we go out into the field, what's going to happen," he said. "What if that unknown comes into play, that unknown factor [of the pandemic] that's going to make this scenario different than others?"

McQuade said he believed he was safe from the virus, and the training rotation felt much like other training exercises he has taken part in for years.

That was the idea, Martin and other Army leaders said. By taking measures to curb the chances of an outbreak, soldiers can focus on the training, on learning how to fight against a near-peer competitor, Martin said.

"It forces us to go through a higher level of thinking than we ever did before, and it was born because we had to create a pandemic-mitigating environment" to separate two units entering and exiting NTC, Martin said. "And I think it's brilliant."

The general said the Army likely has not yet realized the impact that the more expeditionary approach to training could have on the service, but it is clear that soldiers need to prepare to fight in exactly that manner.

"Those are the type of environments we're going to go into," Martin said. "It's a wickedly complex problem, but we have had two brigades that have done it so far ... and the rest of the Army is learning from this today."

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MILITARY



General Dynamics

General Dynamics was awarded an Army contract for the Interim Maneuver Short-Range Air Defense system, shown here on a Stryker A1 vehicle armed with Hellfire and Stinger missiles and a 30 mm cannon.

\$1.2B contract seeks to boost Army's short-range air defenses

Stars and Stripes

General Dynamics has been awarded a \$1.2 billion contract to deliver a short-range air defense system to help protect soldiers from low-altitude threats such as ground support jets and attack helicopters.

A need for the Interim Maneuver Short-Range Air Defense system, which will accompany brigade combat teams on operations, was identified several years ago, as Russia beefed up its aerial attack capabilities. The award was announced as a study by the International Institute for Strategic Studies said the Russian

military is more capable than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

IM-SHORAD will be mounted on a Stryker A1 platform and provide soldiers with protection using guns, missiles, rockets and onboard sensors, according to the contract announced Wednesday by U.S. Army Contracting Command.

The system will include a mission equipment package provided by Leonardo DRS and the Raytheon Stinger missile system, the contract said.

The initial plan was to equip four battalions with 144 IM-SHORAD systems and deploy them to

Europe. But Defense Department plans to move forward with President Donald Trump's directive to pull 12,000 U.S. troops out of Germany, where the largest portion of American service members are based on the Continent, have made it unclear if the deployment will go ahead.

IM-SHORAD was supposed to undergo developmental testing in June, but the coronavirus pandemic and software problems delayed it.

The system is expected to enter service on Sept. 30, 2025, the contract said.

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Tanker pilot praised for landing safely after jet collision

By JULIE WATSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The pilot of a fuel tanker showed impressive skills when he touched down safely in a remote area of California and prevented injuries among the seven other crew members after a midair collision with a fighter jet, a Marine Corps official and safety aviation expert said Wednesday.

It was unclear what happened to cause the F-35B to collide with the KC-130J tanker in the late afternoon Tuesday, said 1st Lt. Brett Vannier, a spokesman at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma.

The fighter jet was refueling when the collision occurred. The pilot ejected successfully from the F-35B. The tanker pilot landed the big aircraft on its belly in a field near the desert town of Thermal.

"It was an impressive maneuver bringing it down safely by force," Vannier said. "His skills kind of speak to itself just in the fact that everyone survived."

Aviation safety consultant and retired Marine Corps Col. Pete Field, a former director of the Naval Test Pilot School, agreed.

"I think the KC-130 crew did a masterful job of airmanship to get that baby down," Field said, noting the size of the tanker that can carry up to 60,000 pounds of fuel.

Military officials said the cause of the collision is under investigation and they could not discuss the damage to the aircraft or other details.

Field, who examined photos of the damaged tanker, said he does not know how things went wrong during what is generally a routine operation.

The images show liquid pouring out of the tanker's port wing and damage to the propeller blades, among other things.

Midair refueling "on any airplane in the fighter world is

something that pilots learn to do in their training command. It's a basic thing," Field said. "This shouldn't have been done badly."

Often the blame lies with the jet pilot who can approach a tanker too quickly or can get too close and not be able to compensate, Field said. But that is highly unusual with today's radar systems and a sophisticated plane like the F-35B. The crash also occurred during the day when visibility should have been good.

Field wondered how much experience the pilot had on the F-35B, a complicated plane.

There have been deadly accidents during midair refueling. On Dec. 6, 2018, a KC-130J and an F/A-18D collided during a night refueling off the coast of Japan, killing six U.S. Marines.

A military investigation found the fighter pilot was not experienced in midair refueling missions at night and unintentionally crossed over the top of the tanker, colliding with the rear of the KC-130J. Poor training was also a factor, the investigation found, and a squadron leaders were fired as a result.

The F-35B is a single-seat combat aircraft that can take off and land conventionally and vertically. That plane crashed near the Salton Sea, an inland lake about 100 miles northeast of downtown San Diego.

The four-engine turboprop tanker landed in Thermal, a small desert city in Riverside County about 125 miles northeast of downtown San Diego.

Photos from the scene posted online by NBC Palm Springs show a military plane on its belly in a farm field near Thermal Airport.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the planes were on a routine mission or a training exercise.

Ramstein school to remain closed after increase in confirmed coronavirus cases

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Ramstein Intermediate School will stay closed to students until Oct. 14 due to quarantine requirements, officials said after the number of confirmed coronavirus cases at the school rose to five.

The school, closed since Sept. 25 after three staff members tested positive, was initially set to reopen Monday.

"Contact tracing is complete, however, the staffing requirements for face-to-face school in-

struction cannot be met until the required quarantine is completed," Department of Defense Education Activity-Europe officials said in a statement Thursday.

One additional case was identified after testing the close contacts of the three staffers, officials said.

The circumstances of the other case were not disclosed.

Students will continue digital learning with their assigned teachers, the school said. Students have three days off during the closure — one for Columbus Day on Oct. 12 and two for teach-

er training days.

Meanwhile, about three dozen students at DODEA's school in Brussels whose bus driver tested positive for the coronavirus last month were released from quarantine this week, DODEA-Europe officials said.

All students who rode Route 1 were cleared to return to school after receiving a second negative coronavirus test Tuesday. Students also had to remain symptom-free in order to be cleared, school officials said.

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KESO-TV/AP

A Lockheed Martin KC-130J tanker made an emergency landing after colliding with an F-35B fighter jet during a refueling operation over the Southern California desert near Thermal on Tuesday.

MILITARY

Tattoo shop on base may begin new trend

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Since the American Tattoo Society opened its latest studio in a storefront northeast of Las Vegas last month, a common reaction from passersby has been disbelief, its owner said.

"It's wild how many people walk by and they kind of look up and it's like, 'Holy ... what am I looking at here?'" said Ryan Harrell, who owns the shop at the Nellis Air Force Base Exchange with his wife, Nicole. "Is this really a tattoo shop inside the exchange?"

Yes, it is. And Military Star Cards are accepted at the store, which opened last month. Its grand opening celebration begins Friday morning.

Though some U.S. bases have had visiting tattoo artists, the exchange's tattoo parlor appears to be the first of its kind. No other Army, Air Force, Navy or Marine exchange has operated or provided space for such a venture before, according to several exchange officials.

Harrell hopes the Nellis location is the first of many on-base shops for his company and has sights set on Fort Bragg, just down the road from the couple's flagship studio in his hometown of Fayetteville, N.C., where they have run the All American Tattoo Convention for several years.

Started by his wife when she was still a schoolteacher more than five years ago, the business caters to military personnel and has since opened a second shop just off Camp Lejeune in the eastern part of the state.

Company staff were already familiar with service regulations, Harrell said, and the owners had existing policies barring designs such as the Confederate flag or extremist, gang-related or other hateful artwork, like those banned by the military.

But news they were opening on a base surprised some industry old-timers who considered it an impossibility for decades,



NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE EXCHANGE/Facebook

American Tattoo Society on Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., is the first known tattoo shop to open on an Air Force or Army installation.

he said. He and his wife were "kind of shot down immediately" several years back, he said.

Then he heard Army and Air Force Exchange Service officials had changed here a few years ago, when several services relaxed their tattoo policies, including the Air Force's 2017 decision to end size limits on most tattoos to boost recruitment.

The commands that operate exchanges on Marine Corps and Navy bases have also been looking into opening tattoo parlors, officials with both outfits said this week.

The two exchange services have worked with Navy medical personnel on protocols for allowing such shops to operate on base, Marine Corps Exchange spokesman Bryan Driver said Wednesday. The service is still evaluating those rules, he said.

Meanwhile, the Navy Exchange Service Command has considered sites but "has no specific plans to open tattoo parlors at any Navy installation," said Courtney Williams, a spokesperson for that service.



AMERICAN TATTOO SOCIETY OF NELLIS/Facebook

Mathias Moretti creates a tattoo for the first time at a shop on a U.S. military installation at American Tattoo Society on Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., on Sept. 4.

AAFES had discussed putting shops at several of its sites, Harrell said, such as planned Freedom Crossing outdoor shopping centers — groundbreaking for one of those on Bragg had been scheduled for this spring — but Nellis was chosen after a day spa in the exchange closed late last year.

Harrell, whose grandfather served at Bragg, still expects to open there and at four other sites in the coming years, but said location doesn't matter as much as the customers.

"We're just happy to be there to do tattoos for the (service members)," he said. The exchange put American Tattoo Society through a rigorous vetting process to ensure it could meet health and safety requirements, AAFES spokesman Chris Ward said in an email this week.

Harrell expected a second on-base shop

to be announced soon, he said in a phone call Sunday.

AAFES was more cautious in an emailed statement to Stars and Stripes. No other locations have been decided on or confirmed, and the exchange is "working to determine whether other locations best support this business," said Julie Mitchell, a spokeswoman for the Dallas-based agency.

Harrell thinks his shop will become a way for military leaders to ensure artists follow uniform and appearance regulations, giving them some peace of mind about the indelible experience many of their troops will undergo.

"They already know they're going to get a tattoo anyway," Harrell said.

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Marines activate its first new base since 1952 on Guam

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps has activated a new base on Guam for 5,000 members of III Marine Expeditionary Force set to move there over the next five years from Okinawa, Japan.

Camp Blaz, near Andersen Air Force Base, is the first new Marine installation since Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany was commissioned in Georgia on March 1, 1952, according to a Marine Corps statement announcing the activation this week.

"As the Marine Corps presence on Guam grows, I am confident that we ... will honor the history of the island of Guam, we will have the courage to defend it, and we will remain committed to preserving its cultural and environmental resources," the camp's first commander, Col. Bradley Magrath, said in the statement.

"Camp Blaz will play an essential role in strengthening the Department of Defense's ability to deter and defend."

U.S. Marine Corps statement
announcing the activation

The activation comes at a time of rising tensions in the Pacific as China presses claims to sea territory and builds military forces that threaten U.S. military stationed in the region.

Camp Blaz is named in honor of the late Marine Brig. Gen. Vicente "Ben" Tomas Garrido Blaz, a Guam native.

"Blaz" legacy reflects the strong relationship that the Marine Corps and the people of Guam have shared since the establishment of the Marine Barracks [on Guam] in 1899," the Marines said

in their statement.

The new base is still under construction in an area known as Finegayan on land that, until recently, was covered in a thick jungle full of snakes and littered with World War II-era bombs and bullets.

The Japanese government is funding \$3 billion worth of projects for the Marines' relocation, with the U.S. government spending another \$5.7 billion, Navy Cmdr. Brian Foster, who is helping oversee construction for the Naval Facilities Engineering

Command, told Stars and Stripes during a tour of the new base in February.

Only 1,300 Marines will be permanently stationed on Guam, with another 3,700 coming to the island as a rotational force in the same way a Marine Air Ground Task Force deploys to Australia's Northern Territory to train each summer, he said.

The heart of Camp Blaz, where six-story barracks will be built for unaccompanied Marines, is next door to Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station Guam, just west of Andersen. Families of Marines working on Blaz will live on Andersen, where another 300 housing units will be built, Foster said.

The facility will include several new ranges, including a "multipurpose" machine gun range along Guam's northwest coast. An abandoned housing

area, known as Andersen South, is being turned into an urban training compound for the Marines, he said.

Families for the Marines' aviation element are being built at Andersen's North Ramp, Foster said.

The formal establishment of Camp Blaz secures a Marine Corps posture in the region that is geographically distributed and operationally resilient, the Marines said in their statement.

"Camp Blaz will play an essential role in strengthening the Department of Defense's ability to deter and defend and is also a testament to the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance," the Marines said.

The Marines will hold an activation ceremony for the base in spring 2021, the statement said.

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NATION

Trump signs temporary funding measure

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has signed a bill to fund the government through Dec. 11, averting the possibility of a government shutdown as the new fiscal year started Thursday.

Trump signed the bill, which was approved by sweeping bipartisan agreement Wednesday, into law early Thursday morning shortly after returning from campaigning in Minnesota.

The temporary extension will set the stage for a lame-duck session of Congress later this year, where the agenda will be largely determined by the outcome of the

presidential election.

The measure would keep the government running through Dec. 11 and passed by a 84-10 vote. The House passed the bill last week.

The stopgap spending bill is required because the GOP-controlled Senate has not acted on any of the 12 annual spending bills that fund the 30% of the government's budget that is passed by Congress each year. If Democratic nominee Joe Biden wins the White House in November, it's likely that another stopgap measure would fund the government into next year and that the next administration and Congress would deal with the leftover business.

The measure is the bare minimum accomplishment for Capitol Hill's powerful Appropriations committees, who pride themselves on their deal-making abilities despite gridlock in other corners of Congress.

The legislation — called a continuing resolution, or CR, in Washington-speak — would keep every federal agency running at current funding levels through Dec. 11, which will keep the government afloat past an election that could reshuffle Washington's balance of power.

The measure also extends many programs whose funding or authorizations lapse on Sept. 30, including the federal

flood insurance program, highway and transit programs, and a long set of extensions of various health programs, such as a provision to prevent Medicaid cuts to hospitals that serve many poor people.

It also finances the possible transition to a new administration if Biden wins the White House and would stave off an unwelcome COVID-caused increase in Medicare Part B premiums for outpatient doctor visits.

Farm interests won language that would permit Trump's farm bailout to continue without fear of interruption. In exchange, House Democrats won \$8 billion in flood aid for the poor.



ANDREW HARRIK/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden speaks aboard a train as it travels Wednesday to Pittsburgh.



ALEX BRANDON/AP

President Donald Trump gestures as he arrives at Minneapolis Saint Paul International Airport, on Wednesday in Minneapolis.

Commission on debates eyes changes to format

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The presidential debate commission says it will soon adopt changes to its format to avoid a repeat of the disjointed first meeting between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden.

The commission said Wednesday that the debate "made clear that additional structure should be added to the format of the remaining debates to ensure a more orderly discussion of the issues."

One possibility being discussed is to give the moderator the ability to cut off the microphone of one of the debate participants while his opponent is talking, according to a person familiar with the deliberations, where it was shown on 16 networks. That's more than any other television event since the Super Bowl, even if it fell short of the 84 million who watched the first debate between Trump and Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Moderator Chris Wallace struggled to gain control of Tuesday's debate in Cleveland because of frequent interruptions, primarily by Trump. The candidates interrupted Wallace or their opponent 90 times in the 90-minute debate, 71 of them by Trump, according to an analysis by The Washington Post.

Wallace, of Fox News, pleaded for a more orderly debate, at one point looking at Trump and saying, "the country would be better served if we allowed both people to speak with fewer interruptions. I'm appealing to you, sir, to do that."

"Ask him, too," Trump said. "Well, frankly, you've been doing more interrupting than he has," Wallace said.

Biden, Trump snipe from road and rails

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden kept up their debate-stage sniping from the road and the rails, fighting for working-class voters in the Midwest while both parties — and the debate commission, too — sought to deal with the most chaotic presidential faceoff in memory.

The debate raised fresh questions about Trump's continued reluctance to condemn white supremacy, his questioning of legitimacy of the election and his unwillingness to respect debate ground rules his campaign had agreed to. Some Democrats called on Biden on Wednesday to skip the next two debates.

Biden's campaign confirmed he would participate in the subsequent meetings, as did Trump's. But the Commission on Presidential Debates promised "additional debates ... to ensure a more orderly discussion of the issues."

Less than 12 hours after the wild debate concluded, Biden called Trump's behavior in the prime-time confrontation "a national embarrassment." The Democratic challenger launched his most aggressive day on the campaign trail all year, with eight

stops on train tour that began midmorning in Cleveland and ended 10 hours later in western Pennsylvania. Trump proclaimed his debate performance a smashing success during a Wednesday evening rally in Duluth, Minn.

"Last night I did what the corrupt media has refused to do," Trump said. "I held Joe Biden accountable for his 47 years of failure."

Biden balanced criticism of Trump with a call for national unity.

"If elected, I'm not going to be a Democratic president. I'm going to be an American president," Biden said at the Cleveland train station. As his tour moved into Pittsburgh, he accused Trump of never accepting responsibility for his mistakes and promised, "I'll always tell you the truth. And when I'm wrong, I'll say so."

While some Republicans feared that Trump's debate performance was too aggressive, he gave himself high marks as he left Washington. He had spent much of the day assailing Biden and debate moderator Chris Wallace on social media.

"If you ever became president you have to deal with some of the toughest people in the world," Trump said at his Duluth rally.

"And Chris Wallace is very easy by comparison."

The first of three scheduled debates between Trump and Biden deteriorated into bitter taunts and chaos Tuesday night as the Republican president repeatedly interrupted his Democratic rival with angry jabs that overshadowed any substantive discussion of the crises threatening the nation.

Trump and Biden frequently talked over each other, with Trump interrupting, nearly shouting, so often that Biden eventually snapped at him, "Will you shut up, man?" Trump refused anew to say whether he would accept the results of the election, calling on his supporters to scrutinize voting procedures at the polls — something that critics warned could easily cross into voter intimidation.

Trump also refused at the debate to condemn white supremacists who have supported him, telling one such group known as the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by." Asked directly on Wednesday if he welcomed white supremacist support, he first said only that he favored law enforcement but when the questioner persisted, he said he had always

denounced "any form of any of that."

On Capitol Hill, Republicans showed signs of debate hangover, with few willing to defend Trump's performance.

Utah Sen. Mitt Romney called the debate "an embarrassment" and said Trump "of course" should have condemned white supremacists.

"I think he misspoke," said South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, the only Black Republican senator. "I think he should correct it. If he doesn't correct it, I guess he didn't misspeak."

Trump did not say he misspoke when asked on Wednesday but claimed he did not know who the Proud Boys were.

"They have to stand down — everybody. Whatever group you're talking about, let law enforcement do the work," he said.

The president's brash debate posture may have appealed to his most passionate supporters, but it was unclear whether the embattled incumbent helped expand his coalition or won over any persuadable voters, particularly white educated women and independents who have been turned off in part by the same tone and tenor the president displayed on the debate stage.

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NATION

Layoffs remain elevated

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits declined last week to a still-high 837,000, evidence that the economy is struggling to sustain a tentative recovery that began this summer.

The Labor Department's report, released Thursday, suggests that companies are still cutting a historically high number of jobs, though the weekly numbers have become less reliable as states have increased their efforts to root out fraudulent claims and process earlier applications that have piled up.

California, for example, which accounts for more than one-quarter of the nation's aid applications, this week simply provided the same figure it did the previous week. That's because the state has stopped accepting new jobless claims for two weeks so it can implement anti-fraud technology and address a backlog of 600,000 applications that are more than three weeks old.

Overall jobless aid has shrunk in recent weeks even as roughly 25 million people rely upon it. The loss of that income is likely to weaken spending and the economy in the coming months.

A \$600-a-week federal check that Congress provided in last spring's economic aid package was available to the unemployed in addition to each state's jobless benefit. But the \$600 benefit expired at the end of July. A \$300 weekly benefit that President Donald Trump offered through an executive order lasted only through mid-September, although some states are still working to send out checks for that period.

A result is that Americans' incomes and spending are declining or slowing. Total paid unemployment benefits plunged by more than half in August, according to the Commerce Department. Consumer spending did rise 1% that month, down from 1.5% in July. But that increase relied in part on consumers drawing upon their savings.

"Unless employment growth picks up, or additional (govern-



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Women walk past a hiring sign as they enter a Target retail store Wednesday, in Westwood, Mass.

ment) aid is extended, consumer spending is at risk of slowing dramatically during the second phase of the recovery," said Gregory Daco, an economist at Oxford Economics.

Other measures of the U.S. economy have been sending mixed signals. Consumer confidence jumped in September, fueled by optimism among higher-income households, though it remains below pre-pandemic levels. And a measure of pending home sales rose in August to a record high, lifted by ultra-low mortgage rates.

Yet some real-time measures indicate that growth has lost momentum with the viral pandemic still squeezing many employers, especially small retailers, hotels, restaurants and airlines, nearly seven months after it paralyzed the economy. An economic index compiled by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York grew in September at a weaker pace than during the summer months.

In its report on jobless claims Thursday, the Labor Department said the number of people who are continuing to receive benefits fell to 11.8 million, extending a steady decline since spring. That suggests that many of the unemployed are being recalled to their old jobs. Another 12 million people are receiving aid under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, which has made the self-employed and gig workers eligible for benefits for the first time.

But the decline in the number of those receiving aid also reflects the fact that tens of thousands of

jobless Americans have exhausted their regular state unemployment benefits. Most of them are transitioning to an extended jobless aid program that provides benefits for an additional three months.

Weekly applications for unemployment benefits are typically watched as a proxy for layoffs, although the data has become muddled in recent months. The flood of laid-off workers during the pandemic recession overwhelmed state agencies.

The states' efforts to clear backlogs and uncover fraud in the new program have made it harder to interpret the government's report on unemployment benefits. Many economists no longer consider it a clear sign of the pace of layoffs.

Initial jobless claims are stuck above the highest levels reached in the 2008-2009 Great Recession. But last week, economists at Goldman Sachs noted that according to other government data, layoffs have fallen below the peaks of a decade ago.

On Friday, the government will issue the jobs report for September, the final such report before Election Day, Nov. 3. Analysts have forecast that it will show a gain of 850,000, which would mark the third straight monthly slowdown in job growth. It would mean that the economy has regained just over half the 22 million jobs that were lost to the pandemic.

The unemployment rate is expected to decline from 8.4% to 8.2%, according to data provider FactSet.

White House, Pelosi wrangle over relief

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House is backing a \$400 per week pandemic jobless benefit and is dangling the possibility of a COVID-19 relief bill above \$1.5 trillion as last-ditch, pre-election negotiations hit a critical phase Thursday.

The offer by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on unemployment is higher than many Republicans would like in any potential COVID deal with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Significant, possibly unbridgeable hurdles remain.

But the talks have gained momentum as the Trump administration presses for an agreement. On Air Force One Wednesday night, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said Trump made an offer that was "extremely generous and certainly above the \$1.5 trillion that has been articulated to date."

The White House proposal yielded ground on funding for state and local governments, supporting a \$250 billion infusion, and backed \$20 billion in help for the struggling airline industry. Both areas are of great interest to Democrats' union backers.

Details on the White House offer, first reported by the Capitol Hill publication Roll Call, were confirmed by congressional aides, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door discussions.

Pelosi postponed a vote Wednesday on a Democratic alternative measure but could take it up again Thursday.

After a 90-minute meeting in the Capitol, Pelosi issued a statement saying that she and Mnuchin would continue to talk. "We found areas where we are seeking further clarification," she said. Their negotiations were expected to resume Thursday.

"We made a lot of progress over the last few days. We still don't have an agreement," Mnuchin said after meeting with Pelosi and briefing top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell.

At the very least, the positive tone set by Pelosi and Mnuchin represented an improvement over earlier statements. But there is still a considerable gulf between the two sides, McConnell said.

Meadow cautioned that Trump won't approach a \$2 trillion threshold. But there's plenty of wiggle room in numbers so large, and the revenue picture for many states is not as alarming as feared when a huge \$3.4 trillion Democratic aid bill passed in May.

In a Wednesday appearance on Fox Business, Mnuchin described the talks as the first serious discussions with Pelosi in several weeks and said he is raising his offer into "the neighborhood" of \$1.5 trillion. That's well above what many Senate Republicans want but would probably be acceptable to GOP pragmatists and senators in difficult races.



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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officials confirm Asian giant hornet sightings

WA BLAINE — Officials confirmed three new sightings of Asian giant hornets in Whatcom County, increasing to 12 the number that have been reported there.

The Bellingham Herald reported the total represents the first sightings of the hornets in Washington state and the U.S. since they were first spotted in Whatcom in 2019.

All three recent sightings were found near Burk Road, southeast of Blaine, in late September, according to the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Traps will be set up in the area. The goal is to catch live Asian giant hornets in those traps, tag them and track them back to their colony to destroy them so the invasive pests don't become established in Washington state.

Museum spares historic home with purchase

NH MANCHESTER — A historic New Hampshire mansion built by a wealthy industrialist has been saved from demolition by a last-minute sale to an art museum.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester had applied for a permit in June to demolish Chandler House in Manchester after being unable to sell it. But a bid from city and community leaders to save the 19th-century home led to its sale to the Currier Museum of Art.

The museum plans to restore rooms on the main level of the house to their original appearance and conduct tours of those areas. The rest of the building will be renovated for office and classroom space.

The 30-room home was built by George Chandler, a banker and a philanthropist. More recently, the house was the home of several bishops in the city and a convent for nuns from the nearby St. Hedwig Church. It hadn't been used for several years and had fallen into disrepair.

Man killed in dispute at haunted house entrance

MI PONTIAC — A dispute over cutting in line led to a fatal shooting outside a popular haunted house in southeastern Michigan, police said.

Investigators were looking for a suspect Monday after the early Sunday shooting at Erebus in Flatonia, the victim was Douglas Reese, 29, from Detroit.

"The victim and his girlfriend had been waiting in line to enter Erebus Haunted House when a male subject in line ahead of them would not move," the Oakland County sheriff's office said.

The victim and the suspect exchanged words as the suspect thought the victim had cut in line ahead of him," the sheriff's office said.

Both men went to their vehicles and shots were heard. Reese was struck in the side, neck and chest, the sheriff's office said, and a witness reported that a blue sedan fled the scene at high speed.



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Still smiling after 1,000 miles

City of Miami Police officer Joe McCrink is hugged Tuesday by Live Like Bella Childhood Cancer Foundation CEO Nicole de Laura Puente after McCrink completed a bicycle ride of more than 1,000 miles for "Live Like Bella" childhood cancer awareness at the Miami Police Headquarters in Miami. In previous years, officers have gathered donations and ridden their bicycles to Key West or Orlando, but the ride was canceled this year because of the pandemic.

Burglars access store from church next door

NE GRAND ISLAND — Burglars who cut through a cement wall stole more than \$250,000 in jewelry and other items from a Grand Island store, police said.

The burglars entered the Oremex Jewelers late Friday or early Saturday. They went to Iglesia Profetica y Misionera church next door and cut through the wall to enter the store. They then cut open two safes, police said.

The burglary caused about \$50,000 damage to the building, the Grand Island Independent reported.

"We do have a couple of leads that we're working on the case," said Capt. Jim Duering, adding that the plan was more well-orchestrated "than what we normally see for our burglaries."

Deputies: Man hid in teen's room for weeks

FL SPRING HILL — A Louisiana man found hiding in a Florida teenager's closet had been staying in the child's bedroom for more than a month, according to investigators.

The Hernando County Sheriff's Office charged Johnathan Lee Rossmoine, 36, with multiple sex crimes Sunday after deputies were called to a Spring Hill home by the parents of the teenager, who found Rossmoine in a closet

THE CENSUS

9 The number of guns found in a nine-day span this month during inspections of passenger carry-on luggage at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Transportation Security Administration officials said Monday. TSA said it will review the circumstances behind each incident to determine a penalty. The guns were found between Sept. 18-26.

in the child's bedroom, the agency announced Tuesday.

Rossmoine allegedly told deputies he traveled from Louisiana to Florida several times to have sexual encounters with the teen. Investigators said he had been in Hernando County for about five weeks when he was discovered.

Deputies said the two met online about two years ago, and the teen referred to Rossmoine as their boyfriend.

Authorities: Man leads police on 3-state chase

PA PITTSBURGH — A man who had just been released from a county jail in western Pennsylvania stole a vehicle and eventually led police on a chase that went into West Virginia before he was finally captured in Ohio, authorities said.

The chase began shortly before noon Monday, when a work truck was reported stolen from a construction site in Pittsburgh. The vehicle was soon stopped by police, but authorities said the driver, Shah Bocella, 24, drove off.

Authorities said an officer fired their weapon during the

stop, though no one was hit by any shots. They did not say what sparked the gunfire.

Bocella then traveled on at least two interstate highways in Pennsylvania before he entered West Virginia shortly before 1 p.m. He soon crossed into Ohio, where state highway patrol officers took him into custody on Interstate 470.

Bear in national park euthanized; safety cited

AK DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE — A grizzly bear that was believed to have gotten into buildings and food storages over the last year has been euthanized amid safety concerns, according to Denali National Park and Preserve.

The adult male bear was captured Thursday, and wildlife staff with the park in Alaska recommended it be euthanized because of its persistent behavior and the amount of food it had accessed, a release from the park said Monday.

The bear was deemed to be a safety concern for people and

properties in the Wonder Lake and Kantishna area of the park.

"Removing a bear from the ecosystem is a rare event in Denali," Acting Superintendent Tom Medina said. "Our mandate is to preserve and protect both wildlife and human life, and these types of actions are very difficult and weigh heavily on park staff."

Asked if this was a matter of improper storage or a determined bear, park spokesperson G.W. Hitchcock said it was believed to be the latter.

Police: Man dies after cliff fall into water

OR TILLAMOOK — A 43-year-old man died after plunging off a cliff into the surf Sunday at the Oregon coast, Oregon State Police said.

Steven Gastelum of Seaside, Ore., climbed a tree on the cliff's edge along the Devil's Cauldron Overlook Trail in Oswald West State Park to pose for a photograph, according to initial information from Oregon State Police.

A limb broke, and Gastelum fell about 100 feet into the Pacific Ocean, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

Authorities in a helicopter and on personal watercrafts worked to find Gastelum and bring him to shore. The state police said he was taken to a Tillamook hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

From wire reports

WEEKEND



How 'Goodfellas' redefined mob films
Books, Page 34



Clockwise, from left:

Bruce Springsteen
Danny Clinch

Gorillaz
Nasty Little Man

Rose, from left, Lisa, and Jisoo of BLACKPINK perform at Coachella in 2019.
Invision/AP

Benee
Paradigm Talent Agency

"Hey Clockface," **Elvis Costello**
Shore Fire Media

FALLBACK OPTIONS

The coronavirus pandemic has taken touring off the table and closed the clubs, but these 20 new and upcoming releases might satisfy some of your music needs

Page 32

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



The ultimate holiday battle

Game on for Sony, Microsoft in the system wars

By GIESON CACHO
The Mercury News

The biggest loser this holiday season will be my wallet.

Sony finally released its pricing for the PlayStation 5. The regular version with an Ultra HD Blu-ray drive will cost \$499 and the digital version without one will weigh in at \$399. They will be released in the U.S., Japan, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea on Nov. 12, and worldwide Nov. 19. That news comes after Microsoft unveiled its pricing plan for Xbox Series S and Xbox Series X. The budget-friendly Series S is priced at \$299, and the high-end Xbox Series X will cost \$499. Both of Microsoft's consoles come out Nov. 10.

That puts Microsoft and Sony on equal footing this holiday season when it comes to the high-end consoles. The systems appear comparable in terms of power and features. They both will have ray tracing, which is the most obvious selling point between the upcoming generation of games and the previous one. Ray tracing enables developers to re-create accurate lighting. For the casual gamer, the graphics will pop more with fire accurately reflecting off water and the light bouncing off glass. The more subtle changes will come through game design as super fast SSDs will make transitioning from action scenes to cut scenes more seamless.

The biggest separation from the two consoles will be content. Sony already has established franchises and heralded studios, and the company put them to work showing off what the PlayStation 5 can do at its showcase. Sony brought out the big guns with the reveal of Square Enix's Final Fantasy XVI and Sony's God of War Ragnarok. Microsoft is no slouch with the Halo Infinite reveal, but more importantly, a buying-spreed of studios that include Obsidian Entertainment, inXile Entertainment, Ninja Theory and Double Fine shores up its roster of first-party developers. What separates the two at this moment is that Sony's teams have had more experience working under the company, and the demos they've shown have been more impressive. Microsoft's recent acquisitions haven't shown much in terms of gameplay, but they do have a strong track record, especially with Obsidian.

On the more affordable end, Microsoft beats Sony in terms of price with its \$299 Xbox Series S compared to the digital version of the PS5 at \$399. The big caveat is that the Series S isn't as powerful as the Xbox Series X or the PlayStation 5 digital, which has the same specs as the regular one minus the optical drive. All of this means that the PlayStation 5 Digital Version could be the best value overall, and the one consumers should target. It offers the same hardware specs as the upper-tier version for a cheaper price. Ideally, consumers would pair that with a 4K television, preferably with an HDMI 2.1 connection.

If you don't have a 4K TV or if you're a desktop gamer, the Xbox Series S could be the perfect



Above: The PlayStation 5 console.
Top: The Xbox Series X console.

solution. It supports 1440p with games running up to 120fps. That's frames per second, not hertz. The hertz is in regard to fresh rate, which can give players a smoother picture that's advantageous in competitive online gaming. It's a super high-end feature available only on a few TVs and monitors at the moment.

The other factor in all this is the price of games. They are going to get expensive. Sony announced the prices for next-gen titles, and it's going to be up to \$69.99. That's going to hurt for many consumers, but it also makes services such as Xbox Game Pass Ultimate even more attractive. If prices keep going up the way they are now, it could make the Netflix-style service the best value overall. Xbox Game Pass Ultimate lets players download more than 100 games with a library that's always expanding. The titles include classics, recent releases and exclusives that come out on the service first. If players want to play the latest Games of War, the first-party Microsoft game will likely launch on the Xbox Game Pass Ultimate, and subscribing to the monthly service may be a better value for gamers than a \$69.99 price.

Sony appeared to counter the service with the PlayStation Plus Collection, a new feature that will let players download some of the top PS4 titles for the PS5 at launch. It's a great library with God of War, Until Dawn and Resident Evil: Biohazard, but not much is known beyond that. No one knows the pricing or even if it's included with a PlayStation Plus subscription.

In this upcoming generation, two ideas will be important. The first is that content will be king. It's no longer going to be about which console has the better specs. It's about which system has the better games. The second is that it appears there will be more of a push to make games a service. It's the idea of living projects like "Fortnite" and the concept of getting players hooked onto services so that they pay monthly payments for a collection of new games.

Gaming in the future could look a lot like streaming services today with platforms fighting over the best content. It looks like Sony and Microsoft have different ideas on that, and it will be up to consumers to figure out which is the better deal.

GADGET WATCH

Neckband earbuds with superior sound

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Recently, someone asked if I only like true wireless earbuds since I write about them often. I am a fan of true wireless and when you look around, obviously I'm not alone. But there are other great choices, including a style that is a personal favorite.

My preferred style is neckbands, which were popular a few years ago but have kind of disappeared.

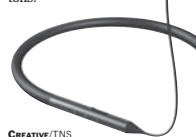
The earbuds are attached to a short wire on each side of a lightweight bendable band, which sits with ergonomic comfort on the back of your neck. I always found this style to be convenient, when the earbuds are taken out, they safely hang from the wires on the neckband.

Knowing that, Creative's Aurvana Trio wireless neckband triple driver earphones with noise isolation had some time around my neck for the past week with great success.

The neckband is great for any listening environment. But what makes these rock is the sound. Inside the triple driver speakers are an 11 mm dynamic Bio-cellulose driver and dual balanced armature drivers. This produced great sound for every type of music with deep bass, lows and highs all sounding right on. Creative echoed my thoughts by calling it audio nirvana for all music genres on their website.

The Bluetooth 5.0 headphones pump out great sound, which features high-quality aptX HD, Qualcomm aptX low latency (reduces audio-video delay) and AAC audio codecs.

Hands-free calls were loud and clear on both ends, thanks to the built-in microphone with Qualcomm cVc 8.0 noise cancellation technology. Controlling the calls, volume, play selections, activating voice assistants and charging are all on the end of the neckband with physical rubber buttons.



CREATIVE/TNS

With Bluetooth 5.0, Aurvana has Multipoint Connectivity, allowing seamless connections to multiple devices. Without having to re-establish connections, the headphones will connect to an iPad and a laptop and switch seamlessly between the two, depending on which is needed.

The outside of each earbud is magnetic, allowing them to clasp together when you have them out of your ears. This is a great help when you still have the neckband on but the earbuds out. Six sets of silicone and foam ear tips and a pouch are included. The battery will last up to 20 hours of playtime before a USB charge is needed.

For a personalized audio experience, Creative's Super X-Fi will set the audio for your ears using algorithms with a head and ear-mapping process incorporated after you send images of your ears and head.

Online: us.creative.com; \$99.99

House of Marley's Smile Jamaica wireless 2 earbuds, part of the Smile Jamaica collection, are a typical Marley product, with nice sound and an eye-catching Eco-conscious design, which starts with the packaging.

It is great to see a budget-friendly choice (\$29.99) with crisp sound, an appealing design and waterproof features.

Each Bluetooth 5.0 earbud has a wood finish and recyclable aluminum with a 9.2 mm driver inside and is attached to a braided tangle-free cable. A three-button control is on the cable with a USB-C port for charging.

Other features include an IPX4 rating for weather and water resistance, quick charge technology, and with a two-hour charge you can expect about nine hours of playtime.

House of Marley has always been an environmentally friendly company and announced that the Smile Jamaica headphones have 100% recyclable packaging. This means the entire package contents can be put into a single mixed-paper recycle bin.

With the Smile Jamaica earbuds, Marley is equally proud of their construction with a cable design using fibers made of 99 percent post-consumer plastic: waste from recycled water bottles, FSC certified wood and recyclable aluminum housings.

Online: thehouseofmarley.com; \$29.99, available in color configurations of black, rasta, cooper, denim and smile Jamaica green



HOUSE OF MARLEY/TNS

WEEKEND: MOVIES

GET YOUR
SLEUTH ON

‘Enola Holmes,’ other Sherlock adaptations to add to watchlist

By SONIA RAO
The Washington Post

The game is afoot, ol' chap! Netflix has released “Enola Holmes” and before we get any further, let us assure you that was the first and last attempt at British parlance you'll read here today. It's just hard not to get swept up in the tweed suits of it all (or the restrictive Victorian-era dresses in which Miss Enola manages to sleuth).

The new film from Harry Bradbeer, known for directing all but one episode of “Fleabag,” stars Millie Bobby Brown as the spunky kid sister of famous brothers Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes (Henry Cavill and Sam Claflin). After discovering her mother (Helena Bonham Carter) has disappeared, the 16-year-old runs away to London on a search mission in lieu of fulfilling Mycroft's wish that she attend finishing school. (Review on Page 21)

“Enola Holmes,” based on Nancy Springer's book series, is the latest in a long line of Sherlock Holmes stories and spinoffs to wind up on screen. If her stylish adventure winds up sparking your appetite for mystery, here are several other takes on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's iconic character to watch at home.

‘Sherlock Holmes’ (1916)

Available to rent on Amazon, this film starring William Gillette in the lead role was thought to be long gone until a dupe negative was discovered in a French film nonprofit's archives. Gillette played Sherlock Holmes on stage many times, his deerstalker cap and Inverness cape shaping the image we still conjure today.

‘The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes’ (1970)

We're skipping a few generations, and over adaptations like the TV shows from 1954 and 1965, to “The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes,” a film rentable on several platforms. It is notable for writers Billy Wilder and L.A.L. Diamond's clever yet melancholy tone, from which the popular BBC series that premiered a few decades later sought inspiration.

‘The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes’ (1984)

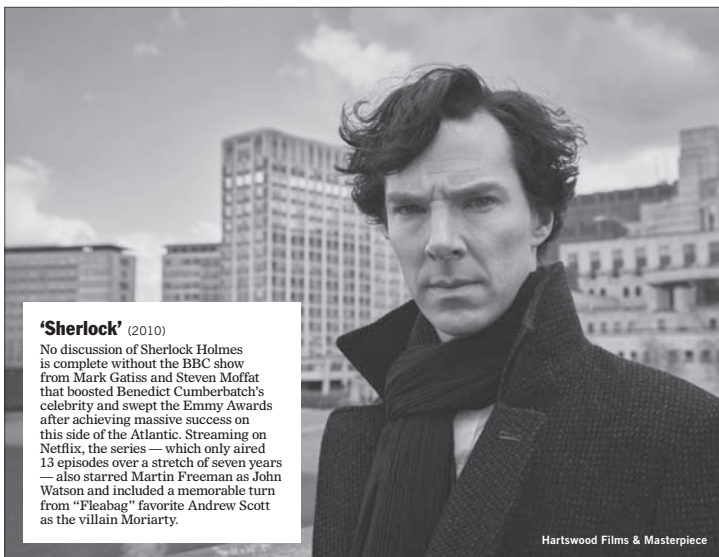
The British series, available to stream on Amazon via BritBox, consists of 41 episodes that aired throughout a decade. Many consider lead actor Jeremy Brett's performance to be the definitive take on Sherlock Holmes.

‘Without a Clue’ (1988)

“Without a Clue,” available to rent on iTunes, upends the established dynamic of Doyle's characters by centering John Watson, ordinarily Sherlock Holmes' right-hand man, as a doctor who solves mysteries and creates a fictional Sherlock character to satisfy the public so that he, Watson, can continue his work incognito. Ben Kingsley plays Watson, and Michael Caine is the actor hired to appear as “Sherlock” in public.

‘Elementary’ (2012)

CBS put a spin on its trademark crime procedurals with “Elementary,” a series set in contemporary New York that stars Lucy Liu as Dr. Joan Watson, a disgraced surgeon hired as a sober companion for recovering addict Sherlock Holmes (Jonny Lee Miller). He's a former Scotland Yard consultant but now works with the New York Police Department. The show, which is streaming on Hulu, premiered after the BBC's “Sherlock,” but lasted until 2019.



‘Sherlock’ (2010)

No discussion of Sherlock Holmes is complete without the BBC show from Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat that boosted Benedict Cumberbatch's celebrity and swept the Emmy Awards after achieving massive success on this side of the Atlantic. Streaming on Netflix, the series — which only aired 13 episodes over a stretch of seven years — also starred Martin Freeman as John Watson and included a memorable turn from “Fleabag” favorite Andrew Scott as the villain Moriarty.

Hartwood Films & Masterpiece

‘Sherlock Holmes’ (2009)

Robert Downey Jr. leaned into his eccentricity for Guy Ritchie's action-heavy “Sherlock Holmes,” available to rent on several platforms. It also stars Jude Law as John Watson and earned two Oscar nods, for art direction and Hans Zimmer's very fun score. The sequel came out in 2011, with another slated for 2021.

From left:
Noomi Rapace,
Robert
Downey Jr.,
Jude Law

Warner Bros. Pictures



Roadside Attractions

‘Mr. Holmes’ (2015)

Set in the 1940s, “Mr. Holmes” features Ian McKellan as a 93-year-old Sherlock Holmes, who is long retired with a faltering memory. He attempts to piece together his final case with the help of his housekeeper's son (Milo Parker), resulting in the sweet story of an aging star, his young protege and their friendship.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

An odd clan

Director Miranda July dreams up a family of grifters in her latest film, 'Kajillionaire'

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Miranda July doesn't seem to have fair-weather fans. There are those who are obsessed. And there are those who don't know who she is. There is no in between.

Even after acclaimed films like "Me and You and Everyone We Know" and "The Future," the author and director is still grateful when someone knows her work. It's why she took note when Dede Gardner, the Oscar-winning producer of "Moonlight" and "12 Years a Slave," wrote her a "beautiful" and "poetic" letter about her novel "The First Bad Man."

"That's not your average Hollywood producer," July said. "I was like huh, I guess when I finish this script, that may be the first person I send it to."

The script in question was "Kajillionaire," a script about a family of grifters in Los Angeles. It came to her one morning when in a half-conscious state she saw three characters, two women with long hair and a man. She was careful to not fall back asleep and instead to write her idea down.

Soon enough, Gardner was over at July's house agreeing to make her film. It was, July said, the first time she didn't have to spend any time looking for money.

Like July's other films, "Kajillionaire" is utterly sincere, a little surreal and quietly crushing. And, of course, it's wholly original. Opening Friday in select theaters, the film follows scammers Robert (Richard Jenkins) and Theresa Dyne (Debra Winger) and their 26-year-old child, Old Dolio (Evan Rachel Wood), in their strange, cheap Los Angeles life, foraging the urban landscape for survival. The decaying office space they rent for sleeping is adjacent to a bubble factory that often spills over into their home. And their routines are upended

when a local extrovert, Melanie (Gina Rodriguez), joins their odd clan. Rodriguez had actually been listening to a July audiobook when their mutual friend Lena Dunham put them in touch.

"I was like 'Oh, my God, give my number, give my address,'" Rodriguez said. "I've never really had an auteur director be like, 'I was thinking of you when I wrote this:'"

Wood had a particularly challenging role in Old Dolio, the heart of the film, who has only ever functioned as a part of her parents' scams and is starting to realize there might be life outside. July wanted to be sure Wood understood the soul of the character before committing.

At dinner, Wood told her that Old Dolio reminded her of Edward Scissorhands, one of her favorite characters.

"They've been completely removed from normal society for a large portion of their lives and probably very devoid of affection or unconditional love," Wood said.

July was thrilled. Wood, she said, had just "showed her spiritual cards."

She challenged her actor with exercises designed to "narrow her emotional bandwidth," but the unusual low voice was all Wood's idea. July laughed that she would be "way too scared to ask an actor to do a different voice for a whole movie."

"I actually have a low speaking voice, but I don't use it," Wood said. A voice coach told her it could be harmful to her singing and advised her to break the habit and speak at a higher register.

Rodriguez wasn't aware of Wood's plan, though, so when she broke out the voice during a take, Wood remembered a look of shock and surprise.

"She didn't know if it was a joke, or if it was real," Wood said. "After they yelled out, she was like, 'Are you really doing that?'"



Focus Features

A woman's (Evan Rachel Wood, right) life is turned upside down when her criminal parents invite an outsider (Gina Rodriguez, left) to join them in a heist in "Kajillionaire."

And I said, 'Yeah, that's Old Dolio!' She just started cracking up."

Aside from the surprises, the experience was profound for Rodriguez, who found July to be exacting and mystical.

"She's just a quiet giant. A fragile champ. She has this dichotomy of two different energies. Her temperament is so calm, but then she's got this explosive art, and that's just surging through her," Rodriguez said. "You just knew that you were in the hands of someone magical."

The film got raves when it premiered at the Sundance Film Festival this year, but the cast has also found it to be strangely reflective of the current moment, too.

"So much of it is about intimacy and connection and being devoid of touch and isolation," Wood said. "We're all strange ver-

sions of Old Dolio right now."

"Kajillionaire" is July's first film in almost 10 years and the first since she had a child in 2012 (her spouse is director Mike Mills). And it's significant to her.

"I wanted to have made two movies (before I had a child) because I know a lot of women only make one movie and I wanted to at least have gotten to make two. There was a sense almost like you were going to die — not actually — but that you might never get to continue being the person you were before. It's so crazy, because what man has ever had that thought?" July said. "But it was all right."

"In a way, I was so hardcore all those years before it was like, OK, I know how to do this. It was a relief to see that I could do it and also that my soul was intact. If anything, you know, it had more in it."



Actors, from left, Gina Rodriguez and Evan Rachel Wood pose with writer-director Miranda July at the premiere of "Kajillionaire" during the 2020 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, in January.

ARTHUR MOLLA, INVISION/AP

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Brown shines as She lock's sister in 'Enola Holmes'

By ANN HORNADAY
The Washington Post

Millie Bobby Brown makes a high-spirited leading-role movie debut in "Enola Holmes," which on paper might sound like a starchy exercise in feminist revisionism, but winds up executing that agenda with wit, pacy storytelling and an overarching mood of cracking good fun.

Anchored by Brown's sturdy performance as Sherlock Holmes' teenage sister, this sprightly paean to mothers, daughters and female autonomy often feels like the spiritual sequel to last year's similarly lively "Little Women," albeit with more jokes, fight scenes and clever interstitial inserts thrown in for the viewer's enjoyment. This rollicking Victorian-era adventure surely isn't canonical, but the Baker Street Irregulars aren't its intended audience anyway. Arthur Conan Doyle might have created the universe in which "Enola Holmes" spins its flights of fancy, but that's where the similarity ends.

As the movie opens, Enola is living happily with her mother,

Eudoria (Helena Bonham Carter), who home-schools her daughter in the liberal arts, along with archery, word games, hand-to-hand fighting, chemistry and fiercely independent thinking. In 19th-century England, it's no surprise that Eudoria also seems to be part of the reform and suffrage movements that are agitating for change in that country, activism that she inexplicably keeps from her bright, curious daughter. When Enola wakes up on her 16th birthday to discover that her beloved mother has disappeared, she's heartbroken. Things look up, then down, when her two much older brothers, the famous Sherlock (Henry Cavill) and the unbearably snooty Mycroft (Sam Claflin), arrive to help.

Adapted by Jack Thorne from Nancy Springer's popular young-adult series and directed by Harry Bradbeer with brio and rich visual flair, "Enola Holmes" takes its heroine from her attractively crammed estate in the English countryside to London, which is teeming with cosmopolitan variety. Like Armando Iannucci's recent "The Personal History of David Copperfield," "Enola Holmes" is



NETFLIX/AP

While searching for her missing mother, an intrepid teen (Millie Bobby Brown, right) uses her sleuthing skills to outsmart big brother Sherlock (Henry Cavill, left) in "Enola Holmes," co-starring Sam Claflin.

an offhandedly diverse production, a flourish that gives it added life and verve. On her travels, Enola meets a handsome son of privilege named Lord Tewksbury (Louis Partridge), another chance for the story to turn the tables. It turns out he's being pursued by nefarious forces, giving Enola the chance to rescue him by dint of her superior intelligence and physical bravery.

Brown is surrounded by a superb ensemble of supporting players: Fiona Shaw brings her signature drollery to her role as

a prissy finishing-school headmistress, and Claflin is amusingly fatuous as the insufferable Mycroft. But the movie succeeds or fails on her portrayal of a 16-year-old who has inherited the Holmes family brain (she's particularly gifted with unscrambling ciphers), but who's still naive in the ways of the world. Brown plays that contradiction with unstudied ease, delivering dry asides to the camera with just the right amount of cheek, but never devolving into adorability for its own sake. She brings added warmth and game,

understated grace to a movie that might begin to lag by the third act — at two hours and change, it feels unnecessarily long — but whose sunny disposition never falters.

"Enola Holmes" offers a brisk, exuberant escape from the heaviness of modern times, with its leading actress lending her own appealing touches to the journey. When the game is afoot, she's more than capable, not just of keeping up, but winning the day.

"Enola Holmes" is rated PG-13 for some violence. Available on Netflix. Running time: 103 minutes.

Surreal but earnest 'Kajillionaire' follows family of scammers' schemes

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Old Dolio Dyne (Evan Rachel Wood), curtains of long blonde hair hiding her face, baggy clothes hanging off her frame, stands before a parenting class she's crashed. And in her low, guttural voice, she describes a hypothetical young girl, named Old Dolio, after a homeless man her parents hoped would write her into his will. The girl does not understand "tender feelings," she says, and as the instructor strokes Old Dolio's mane, she almost weeps, the sting there, through a window, bathing this moment of strange intimacy in golden light.

Old Dolio is the protagonist of writer/director Miranda July's "Kajillionaire," following a family of scammers living on the existential edge in sunbaked Los Angeles. This is July's third feature, after 2005's "Me and You and Everyone We Know," and 2011's "The Future." And it's her best yet. July has always been confidently committed to her unique tragicomic tone, but with this film, she reveals more of the big beating heart underneath the stylized irony. "Kajillionaire" is surreal, but plausible, a tale of outsiders desperately searching for connection, and finding it in the unlikelyst of ways.

The Dyne family, Robert (Richard Jenkins), Theresa (Debra Winger) and Old Dolio, live on the knife's edge, scraping by with small-time crookery, scams and small theft, mingling their hermitic empty office building that should be con-



FOCUS FEATURES/AP

Gina Rodriguez left, and Evan Rachel Wood star in the crime comedy "Kajillionaire."

demned. Several times a day, they have to collect and dispose of mountains of pink foam that seeps through the wall from the "Bubbles Inc." next door, though the owner still charges them rent, which they are very behind on. It's a minute-to-minute existence for the trio.

While running an airline baggage insurance scam, they encounter Mela-

nie (Gina Rodriguez) on a cross-country flight. She's a gorgeous, bubbly gal who seems unnaturally interested in the shabby pair that is Robert and Theresa, so they let her in on the scheme and she tags along. Her willingness to participate in their increasingly desperate thefts is incongruous, but it becomes clear that Melanie is missing something in her life

too, though her parents' embrace of this newcomer throws Old Dolio for a loop.

July's script is deftly layered, using role-play within the story to illustrate the yearning the characters feel for the warmth of family bonding, such as when the foursome perform some morbid domestic theater at the home of a dying man they intend to rob. Raised not by wolves but by thieves, Old Dolio can only function in a transactional relationship: a deal, a gig, a three-way split. Kindness, or even social niceties, for the sake of it, are as foreign to her as a career, and Melanie's bright presence in her drab world rocks her foundation. While all the actors are splendid, Rodriguez is inexplicably perfectly cast, and she's startlingly great in this role.

"Kajillionaire" bears comparison to the work of other auteurs that toy with surreality and absurdism, like Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze and Charlie Kaufman. But there's something so tender and earnest at the core of this film — not just heart, but something sweeter and more pure: a stack of perfect pancakes, presents wrapped with a bow. The soft, pink, gooey center of "Kajillionaire" is like the foam that bursts forth, tumbling down the wall from Bubbles Inc., swept away but never kept at bay. With this strange, dark dramedy, July reminds us that walls can never retain the softest parts of ourselves yearning to break free.

"Kajillionaire" is rated R for some sexual references/language. Running time: 107 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Blazingly difficult, yet completely addictive

Ever-changing levels require players to stay sharp in Spelunky 2

By Christopher Byrd

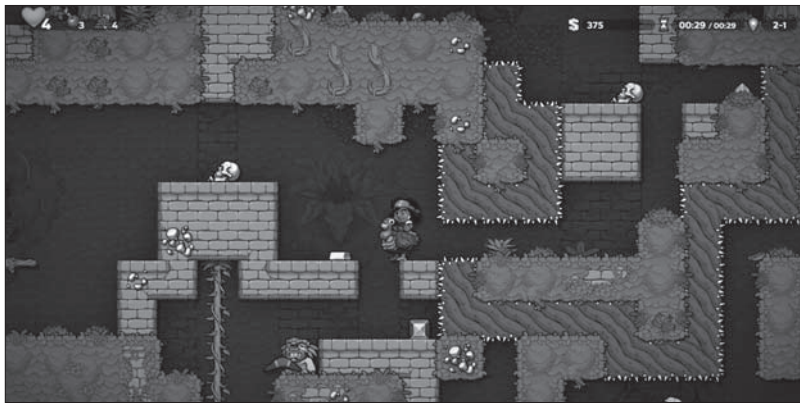
Special to The Washington Post

Can you be enamored with a game and downright horrible at it? I'm talking about being so bad that it's a struggle to get past its opening set of levels? If Spelunky 2 has convinced me of anything, it's that the answer is a perverse "yes." Over the past few days, I've barely made a dent in this blazingly difficult platformer that is designed from top to bottom to end play sessions as quickly and mercilessly as an old-school, quarter-chomping arcade game designed by a misanthrope.



Spelunky 2 drops players into the role of an intrepid explorer who journeys to the moon to explore a vast underground complex. Initially, players can select from four characters: Colin Northwood, a bloke who sports a mutton chops beard; Margaret Tunnel, who is keen on purple dress and looks like a swashbuckler in the making; Roffy, a sloth with a pompadour hairdo that has a '50s vibe; and Anna Spelunky, whose parents have gone missing while exploring the lunar complex. Other characters can be unlocked later. Alas, I've yet to make their acquaintance.

I never played the first game, so even after the short (and for new players, indispensable) tutorial, it took me a while to even begin to wrap my mind around the game's many subtleties. Having played tons of platformers since I was in elementary school, I had no trouble with the basic control scheme. On a PlayStation controller: x is jump; square is used to attack with a whip, pick things up and throw; triangle is used to toss a rope to climb up or



Mossmouth LLC

In Spelunky 2, the sequel to the roguelike platformer, the story deepens as more randomly-generated adventures beckon.

down to reach difficult, or perilous spots; and circle is used to drop a bomb.

Although Spelunky features many staple items one would expect to find in other platformers — keys, treasure chests, deadly spikes, traps, etc. — figuring out all of the ways that such objects can be interacted with may take time. For instance, I knew that falling on spikes would lead to death, but I was mildly shocked to discover that I could run through them. Similarly, although I intuited that I could pick up an item (like a rock off the ground) and throw it at an arrow trap, triggering it so I could scout by unperformed, I had a eureka moment when I realized I could use a rope to do the same thing. Ditto when I found out that treasure boxes and keys could be chucked at enemies to kill them without risking the items' physical integrity. I'm tempted to cite other examples of things I learned over the last few days, but part of the joy of Spelunky is working out

its different systems for yourself.

Spelunky 2 is a roguelike, so players can expect randomly generated levels. What makes the game particularly addictive is that the difficulty of a given run can swing wildly from one go to the next. If you're lucky, you might begin a level with, say, a pet companion close at hand. If you manage to carry it to the exit and keep the little critter alive, you'll be rewarded with an extra heart, your health in the game. If you're not lucky, you might find a pet sandwiched between traps with multiple enemies patrolling nearby.

Even having not played the original, I had heard tales of one particularly notorious enemy, the cave mole. Verily, I curse them and all their brood. Cave moles can tunnel under the ground and pop up in the most unexpected places to ruin your run. I was positively gobsmacked the first time I entered an item shop, a traditional sanctuary in games, and one of those

fiefs bound through the ceiling to knock off a heart. Naturally, that threw me into a frantic effort to retaliate, but when I attacked the mole, I accidentally also hit the shopkeeper, which caused him to pull out a shotgun and finish me off.

Generally, it has been easy for me to laugh off the myriad ways that Spelunky can snuff out one's avatar — stumbling on traps placed on either side of the exit to a level provided one particularly memorable send-off. Crucially, the levels themselves are short. It's possible to zip through many in less than forty seconds, making it easy to muster up the energy for another run.

Though I'm only now gazing past the base of a formidable difficulty curve that seems to vanish into the clouds, I can still say that Spelunky 2 is one of my favorite no-nonsense video games to come along this year.

Platforms: PC, PlayStation 4
Online: bitworks.com/spelunky_2

Greatness of Super Mario Galaxy undermined by poor Switch controls

By Elise Favis

The Washington Post

Porting a game such as Super Mario Galaxy to the Nintendo Switch is tricky. How much of the classic game do you leave untouched? And, for a title dependent on motion controls, how do you transfer the experience to a handheld console? The answers to these questions, it turns out, are not clear.

The popular space-faring platformer made its debut on Wii in 2007, primed with motion controls that let Mario spin, balance and hop from one planet to the next. On Wii, using a nunchuck and a Wiimote, this worked well enough, but mechanically, it was the least engaging part of the game. Brought to the Switch as part of the recent Super Mario 3D All-Stars bundle, motion controls for Super Mario Galaxy remain, but the implementation is tricky and outdated for the modern revival.

Super Mario Galaxy is still an excellent game in every other aspect. The ingenious level design holds up, where you jump between asteroids, planets and comets as well as discover beautifully crafted environments (which are even more gorgeous in full HD on Switch). The platforming holds up, which is complemented by fun and creative design decisions such as differing gravitation pulls and the sheer excitement of exploration. It just is not all that easy to play on Nintendo Switch.

You can experience Super Mario Galaxy on the go, or on your TV with a Switch, but each comes with a level of frustration. The most accessible is docked mode, which connects your Switch to your television, emulating a similar experience you'd have on a Wii or Wii U. Just like the Wiimote, you can use your Joy-Con's or Pro Controller's gyroscope controls for a variety of maneuvers, such as balancing

Mario on the Star Ball, a large sphere you carefully teeter upon and glide through narrow paths. Or, another example is controlling a manta ray through twisting waterways by tilting your Joy-Con left and right.

Performing these maneuvers would be better if Nintendo had ditched motion controls completely, especially when a docked Switch was not detecting a Joy-Con's movements with precision. Although Nintendo keeps most of these motion controls intact, there are some instances where an alternative is offered.

For the first time, you can press Y to make Mario spin (an important move that stuns enemies, shatters ice and more). On Wii and Wii U, you would shake the Wiimote to perform this action.

On Switch, you can still do so by wagging the Joy-Con, but the option of simply pressing a button (especially if your hand tires), is a wonderful addition. I

wish that same care was extended to the rest of the controls.

Controlling the star pointer (a cursor guided by the movement of your Pro Controller or right-hand Joy-Con in docked mode or with the touch screen in handheld mode), is among one of the most frustrating changes in Super Mario 3D All-Stars. The star pointer is used to capture collectibles called star bits, shooting star bits at foes or activating pull stars, which have a gravitational pull that yanks Mario toward them.

Using the Joy-Con works fine, but problems arise with the Pro Controller and handheld mode. With a Pro Controller, gyroscope controls are used to control the star pointer, which feels less natural since you are navigating it through feel, rather than pointing directly at the screen like you would with the Wiimote.

In handheld mode, the star pointer is operated entirely through the touch screen. This

might sound like a good solution, but Super Mario Galaxy often requires multitasking. For example, while fighting a boss, you may be running away from them, avoiding their line of fire, trying to collect star bits and so on. Whenever I wanted to acquire star bits, I would have to keep Mario in place, let go of the joystick and touch the screen. Super Mario Galaxy can be a fast-paced game, and having to stop and touch the screen during a tense moment can ruin the experience.

It's best to play Super Mario Galaxy by planting yourself in front of the television. This isn't possible for everyone, creating an accessibility issue for the game and leaving Switch Lite owners with the restrictions of playing in handheld.

As one of the finest Super Mario platformers, you won't want to miss out on playing Super Mario Galaxy. Just expect some hurdles along the way.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Hades puts on a storytelling masterclass

By GENE PARK
The Washington Post

So many games these days are including “post-game” content as part of their sales pitch. Post-game content describes all the ways games try to keep you engaged even after the main experience is over.

Hades by Supergiant Games deftly solves this problem, all while being a single-player, character-focused family drama. Like many great stories, its premise is simple. You are Zagreus, prince of the underworld, and for reasons yet to be discovered, he wants to leave his literal hell of a home. Hades, the temperamental and emotionally abusive father of “Zag,” is determined to impede his son’s escape by setting up a series of security checkpoints.

It’s in the rogue-like genre, which means the player is expected to die over and over again. Conveniently, Zag is a god, so he resurrects back home to try again and again, getting a bit stronger and smarter each time. But it’s in death that the game’s narrative begins to shine.

Home for Zag isn’t just the beginning part of the journey. It’s his literal living quarters, where his family, including step-mother Nyx and mentor Achilles, hang out, eat, sleep and chat. And every time, the player is rewarded with new pieces of dialogue, character-focused moments, and even getting to observe dialogue scenes between two other characters. Failure and starting over in rogue-like games are part of the experience, but the reasons usually remain utilitarian by nature. Re-equip your character with new abilities you might’ve gained, level yourself up to get a bit stronger, pick a new weapon and try another run.

In Hades, failure is a progression of the story. Every setback is a chance to move forward as a playable character, and as the protagonist in this hero’s journey. Every recurring boss battle has new dialogue, revisiting past gameplay sessions, remarking on your new equipment or abilities and sometimes even switching them out for new characters (with similar move sets).

And the game is constantly throwing rewarding decisions at you. Hades often gives you a choice of one or more doors, each leading to different rewards or a reward. This could be “darkness,” a currency that goes toward Zag’s passive buffs, like making him hit harder from behind an enemy, or recovering more life in every room.

Other runs might have you bump into even more characters. It was always a delight finding the character Sisyphus, at peace with his plight pushing a boulder for eternity. I’ve been giving him a bunch of nectar. Each time you give a character nectar, they may give you a special item, or their relationship with you deepens, revealing more character moments, backstory and background.

As you journey through the underworld, the gods of Olympus, including Zeus himself, decide to lend some help in the form of temporary powerups and abilities that last for a run.

Zag’s reasons for leaving the underworld are best left for the player to discover. But even when the player is finally successful, the game throws you another narrative hook. Journey’s end rewards Zag with only more questions, giving the player yet more reasons to escape the underworld one more time.

Platforms: macOS, PC, Nintendo Switch
Online: supergiantgames.com/games/hades

The true star of ‘Avengers’

Sandra Saad’s performance as Ms. Marvel stands out

By GENE PARK
The Washington Post

Sandra Saad had no idea she was auditioning to be a Marvel superhero. The casting call asked for a Muslim American, and Saad had been looking for roles that felt right to her. She rejects any script that makes non-white people seem inserted to meet some criteria for diversity or a role that veers toward tokenism.

She liked that this mystery character was a self starter, an enthusiastic person whose familial upbringing informs her future. Saad was drawn to Kamala Khan, also known as Ms. Marvel, before even knowing who she was. And she just happened to be of a similar ethnic background.

“She’s a full character — a normal, great girl. She’s not here for a diversity checkbox,” Saad said. “She’s just living her life as a girl who just happens to be Muslim and happens to be Pakistani.”

Saad’s performance, as well as the character of Ms. Marvel, is one of the more universally acclaimed features of Marvel’s Avengers by Crystal Dynamics, released early September. Director Shaun Escayg (whose credits include The Last of Us and recent Uncharted titles) and the Crystal Dynamics team crafted a story that exceeded expectations for an Avengers video game. Review after review attribute this success to Ms. Marvel.

At age 11, the would-be Avenger Kamala Khan won a fan fiction writing contest hosted by the Avengers. A tragic event at the celebration, later known as A-Day, ends in the supposed death of Captain America and thousands of innocent Bay Area residents either dead or becoming superpowered “Inhumans.” Khan inherits powers to morph her body into any size, and the Avengers break up from the fallout.

After five years of research, a 16-year-old Khan is determined to find the truth of what happened that day, and to get the Avengers back together. Through luck and ingenuity, she finally finds a lost Avenger. Unfortunately, it’s Bruce Banner, who’s lost complete control of



Square Enix photos

Sandra Saad’s portrayal of Kamala Khan, also known as Ms. Marvel, is one of the more universally acclaimed features of Marvel’s Avengers.

his Hulk persona. Once Kamala calms Banner, the two slowly and awkwardly form a bond.

Unlike Mark Ruffalo’s depiction of Banner in the films, the game’s Banner (played by Troy Baker) is a tortured soul through and through. The Hulk seems less a comic relief “party trick” and more of a burden. While initially excited about her powers, Khan still suffers from the trauma of A-Day. The real fight of Marvel’s Avengers is the inter- and intra-personal conflict within each member of the team and each of the heroes. Kamala and Bruce tackle this in their own way.

“We had all those conversations about the similarities between Bruce and Kamala, and this uncertainty of ‘OK am I weird or not? Is this cool or is it not? Am I saving people?” Saad said. “They both struggle with this thing in them that they don’t understand that’s possibly monstrous. There’s this great feeling of guilt for A-Day, and the Avengers feel responsible for what happened to Kamala and these Inhumans.”

The game and Kamala are funny. A

road trip scene between the two leads has become a fan favorite.

Saad said one of the most striking things about working on the game was doing the voice work, then acting out the same scene in motion capture while retaining that same voice and tone.

“In the voice booth, all of your energy has to be focused through this one part of your body, whereas when you go into the mock-up stage, you have to keep that voice,” she said. “And you want to make sure that you give the animators and developers exactly what they need.”

She said she learned a lot from experienced industry talent such as Baker and Laura Bailey, who plays Black Widow. Both were lead characters in the recent hit The Last of Us Part II.

“Anything can change,” Saad said. “So many scenes I had with Troy would change completely from just a glance. All that stuff isn’t in the script. It just comes from being an actor. So you can’t plan too much before you come to the stage, because that’s where the real work happens.”

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Swept away by Rome's sights and sounds

As we've had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. Here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe at the other end of this crisis.

I'm hard at work, writing in my hotel room. I've spent the whole afternoon splicing changes into the next edition of my Rome guidebook. It's time for a quick little break, but stepping outside is hazardous. It's too easy to sweat away into a Roman sea of colorful — and fragrant — distractions. The current out there is too strong. Still, promising to be back at my desk in a few minutes, I decide to take the risk and plunge in ...

From my hotel, I flow downhill to the Pantheon's portico, where I wade into the surf of images. Designer shades and flowing hair are backlit in the magic-hour sun, happy ice-cream lickers sit on a marble bench, and a fountain spritzes in the background under an obelisk exclamation point. Romanian accordion players stroll along, entertaining passersby.

As I let go of the Pantheon's columns, the current sweeps me past siren cafes and TV crews covering something big in front of the parliament building, and out into Via del Corso. On my swim through the city, this is the deep end: The crowd from the suburbs comes here for some cityscape elegance. Today they've gooped on a little extra hair product and have put on their best T-shirts, leggings and heels.

Veering away from busy pedestrian boulevard, I come upon Fausto, a mad art-

ist standing proudly amid his installation of absurdities. He's the only street artist I've met who personally greets viewers. After surveying his tiny gallery of hand-scrawled and throat-provoking tidbits, I ask for a card. As he gives me a handmade



Rick Steves

piece of wallet-sized art, he directs me to the end of the curb and his "secretary" — a plastic piggy bank for tips. I pass a homeless man, tattered but respectfully dressed, leaning against a wall. He's savoring a bottle of wine while studying the parade

of Roman life as if trying to follow the plot. Next, I walk with twins from Kentucky, giddy about celebrating their 40th birthdays together here in Rome. Their Dubblemint smiles and high energy argue a good case for embracing the good life. Moving on, I slip into a church just as the ushers close the doors for Mass. Inside, the white noise of Roman streets gives way to an incensed hum. I slip down the side aisle, hands folded as if here to worship, to catch a glimpse of a Caravaggio, that thriller of the early 17th century.

Slipping back outside, I find myself at the north entrance of the ancient city. Determined to swim to my hotel room to get back to work, I pass the same well-dressed bum with the wine buzz, still intently caught up in the city. I imagine being in his pickled head for just a moment.



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONICELLI/Rick Steves' Europe

The Pantheon, and the tourists always nearby, represent a typical snapshot of Rome.

Near him, guys from Somalia launch their plastic fluorescent whirlybirds high into the sky while their friends slam plastic doll heads into boards so hard the heads become spilled goo. Then the dolls creepily reconstitute themselves, ready for another brutal slam. Selling these street trinkets keeps undocumented African immigrants from starving. Seeing them today makes me think that if I had bought all the goofy things people tried to sell me on the streets of Rome over the years — from the flaming Manneken Pis lighters and the 5-foot-tall inflatable bouncing cigars to the twin magnets that jitter like crickets — I could have opened a

kitschy museum. Rome is a cauldron of urban life — mixing random bits from today, yesterday and centuries gone by. It's high class and low class, sacred and profane, grandiose and fragile, stormy and tranquil all at once — a mix seemingly designed to give visitors from far away indelible memories. In Rome, one thing leads to another. For a traveler trying to catch up on his notes, that can be dangerous.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. You can email Rick at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

Sites, events across Europe commemorate Napoleon's exploits

Napoleon Bonaparte is one of the most celebrated, yet controversial, leaders in human history. Widely considered one of the greatest military commanders of all time, he is also lauded for having introduced a number of reforms to law, education and civil institutions. Conversely, rigged elections, a ruthless police state, reinstatement of slavery in the French colonies and his use of propaganda to glorify his victories while blaming others for his failures earn him the label of despicable tyrant. Following in the footsteps of "Le Petit Caporal" leads to a number of fascinating museums, battlefields and monuments recalling his sway across the continent.

Ajaccio, France: Our tour begins in the city of Napoleon's birth, the capital of the Mediterranean island of Corsica. The house in which Napoleon was born on Aug. 15, 1769, to parents, Charles and Letizia, to another painting a picture of Corsica at the time of his birth, just 15 months after France had purchased Corsica from the Italian city-state of Genoa. The museum is open daily except on Mondays and holidays year-round. Online: tinyurl.com/y63xwv5q

Other museums in the Corsican capital devoted to Napoleon include the Naporama, a collection of dioramas depicting battles, victories and significant life events peopled by Playmobil figures. Online: tinyurl.com/yy-orxl4r



Karen Bradbury

Slavkov u Brna, Czech Republic: On Dec. 2, 1805, the French Army, led by Napoleon, emerged victorious against the forces of a coalition between Tsar Alexander I of Russia

and Holy Roman Emperor Francis II at the Battle of Austerlitz, also known as the Battle of the Three Emperors. This area is covered with enough historical sites to keep an explorer busy for an entire day or longer. The Pratzen Peace Monument, erected atop of the plateau in the shape of a Slavonic tomb, houses a chapel and the remains of the soldiers recovered from the battlefield, and a museum displays an illuminated map of the battle.

The Project Austerlitz regularly schedules battle re-enactments known as Napoleonic Days. Commemorations to mark of the 215th anniversary of the Battle of Austerlitz, originally scheduled for June, have been



istock

The Battle of Austerlitz near 1805 is regularly re-enacted near Tvarozna, Czech Republic. This year, the date is Nov. 27-29.

rescheduled to Nov. 27-29 of this year. The theme of this year's re-enactment will be Napoleon's "Lion's Leap," with infantry, cavalry and artillery executing their maneuvers in great numbers on the Pratzen Heights.

Entry to the re-enactment is free; for tribute seating with catering in a heated tent on Nov. 28, tickets are essential; these go for 1800 Czech Koruna (about \$78) and can be obtained online at ticketstream.cz.

Leipzig, Germany: At the Battle of Leipzig, fought on Oct. 19, 1813, the combined forces of Russia, Prussia, Austria and Sweden defeated Napoleon's waning forces. The Voelkerschlachtdenkmal, or Monument to the Battle of the Nations, commemorates the defeat of

Napoleon's French army and a battle in which Germans were killed on both sides of the conflict. The 300-foot-tall, concrete and granite structure, completed in 1913, saw action once again in World War II, as Nazi forces in Leipzig made their last stand against U.S. troops. The FORUM 1813 museum, at the base of the Monument, displays rare weapons, uniforms and the personal mementos of those who fought there. Online: tinyurl.com/y35h2f6o

Elba, Italy: Following his defeat and his abdication as emperor of France on April 11, 1814, Napoleon was banished to the tiny island of Elba in the Tyrrhenian Sea. He did not stay there for long, however. In March 1815, he escaped exile

and returned to Paris, where he regained supporters and reclaimed his title. Napoleon's brief time on the island is noted at the National Museum of Napoleonic Residences. Two villas, the Palazzina dei Mulini in Portoferraio and the nearby Villa di San Martino, shed light on his public and private life there. During the time he spent on the island, Napoleon reactivated trade and mining activities, undertook road improvements and conceived a number of projects to support the development of agriculture and fishing. The museums are open daily except for Tuesdays. Online: tinyurl.com/qrutubzm

Waterloo, Belgium: Following his escape from Elba and reclamation of the French throne, the period known as the "Hundred Days" saw the forces of Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia conclude an alliance against Napoleon, forcing a number of military engagements leading up to Battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815, at which Napoleon's last army was decisively defeated. The Memorial of Waterloo 1815 pays tribute to the some 40,000 soldiers killed or wounded during the fighting. This museum complex located 10 miles south of Brussels on the site of the battle includes the Lion's Mound, the Panorama of the Battle of Waterloo, a house and the Hougomont Farm, a walled compound regarded as the last structure standing following the battle. Online: waterloo1815.be/en

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe

Cuisine for carb lovers

Forget your diet at Grafenwoehr's Pizzeria Santa Lucia II restaurant

By IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

Pizzeria Santa Lucia II is the sort of place you go either before the day of a marathon for carb-loading, or after you've decided to cast away an annoyingly restrictive eating regimen.

Keto and Atkins Diet devotees, proceed with caution to the salads; everyone else, dig in. The pasta dishes are priced reasonably for one, but are big enough to be shared family-style.

This restaurant just outside the Grafenwoehr base gates is my favorite Italian spot in the area. They have about seven different pasta dishes and they're customizable, should you want meat or seafood.

They do have limited appetizers; go with something on the light side if you're planning on pasta, such as the bruschetta with tomato and onions, seasoned with a hint of cilantro.

My favorite main course is the warm gnocchi covered in a creamy gorgonzola cheese sauce. The potato-filled pasta goes well with the house hells beer. I've had the tortellini al forno as well as the rigatoni, but nothing, in my opinion, tops the gnocchi.

Santa Lucia also has more than 20 pizza options. My personal



favorites are the margherita and the Roma, which is topped with salami, ham and mushrooms.

I sit inside during the summer and fall, since the local insects love nothing more than to hover over your food and drink. Santa Lucia has plenty of space inside for social distancing, but if you prefer the al fresco experience on a pleasant day, there are several outdoor tables.

The restaurant has a unique decor, with plants around the perimeter and a few colorful horses that serve as barriers between tables. The staff is also very accommodating, even when the restaurant is busy. If you're a regular, they remember you and ask if you want the usual.

They've got another edge in a small town like Grafenwoehr for those who wake up after a late Saturday night with nothing in the fridge — they're open Sundays, too.

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IMMANUEL JOHNSON/Stars and Stripes

The main course of gnocchi gorgonzola at Pizzeria Santa Lucia II in Grafenwoehr, Germany, has a thick sauce and is served as a hefty portion.



The bruschetta with tomatoes and onions is a light start before the heaping main meals at Pizzeria Santa Lucia II.

PIZZERIA SANTA LUCIA II

Address: Am Sudhaus 2,

92655 Grafenwoehr

Hours: Open daily from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5 p.m.-10 p.m. The kitchen closes 30 minutes before closing time. Prices: Between five and 18 euros.

Menu: German and English. Takeout is available. Phone: 4 49 09641 91455

— Immanuel Johnson

Deliciously elegant stuffed portobello mushrooms

By JOE YONAN
The Washington Post

Nigel Slater is a food writer's food writer. The prolific British author's famously brief recipe introductions read like haikus: "Roasted pumpkin. Smooth, silky mash." "Autumn mushrooms, ribbons of pasta, a breath of aniseed." "Crisp pastry. Warm banana. The scent of maple syrup."

He's a cook's cook, too, long advocating a seasonal, breezy approach in the kitchen that has endeared him to readers for decades. In Slater's hands, few recipes seem daunting — and so many seem enticing.

Slater's latest book is "Greenfeast: Autumn, Winter," a celebration of simple vegetarian cooking for colder weather — or, as he writes so beautifully, when "our appetite is prickled by the sudden drop in temperature."

This time of year, "more food will come to the table in deep casseroles and pie dishes," he writes. "I dig out my capacious ladle for a creamed celery root soup as soft as velvet. The temperature of the plates and bowls will change. We want to hold things that warm our hands, a sign of the happiness to come."



LAURA CHASE DE FORMIGNO/The Washington Post

Portobellos with chickpeas and tahini is surprisingly elegant, as well as delicious.

I've stuffed plenty of portobello mushrooms in my time and wasn't necessarily looking for another such recipe, but Slater's drew me in anyhow. It's not complicated: You mash chickpeas into a garlicky, lemony, hummus-esque paste, spread it on two upturned mushroom caps, press in more whole chickpeas (and a sprinkling of black and white sesame seeds) and bake. The puree turns silky, and the mushrooms

get pleasantly tender, while staying steak-like enough that you need a knife and fork.

The chickpeas fit neatly inside, making this quite possibly the only stuffed portobello mushroom dish I've ever had, let alone made, that I'd classify as elegant. Perhaps only Slater could manage such a feat.

PORTOBELLOS WITH CHICKPEAS AND TAHINI

Ingredients

2 large portobello mushrooms (about 1 pound)
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 garlic cloves
2 teaspoons ground sumac
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon fine sea salt, or more to taste

One (15-ounce) can no-salt-added chickpeas, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons tahini
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
2 teaspoons sesame seeds
2 teaspoons black sesame seeds (optional; may substitute white sesame seeds)

Directions

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 425 degrees.

Wipe the heads of the mushrooms with a damp paper towel. Cut out the stems, then place the mushrooms, gill side up, on a rimmed baking sheet. Score the inside of each mushroom all over with the tip of a knife, to allow the oil to penetrate, then drizzle 1 tablespoon of the olive oil onto the mushrooms.

Using a mortar and pestle, crush the garlic, then pound in 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, plus the sumac, lemon juice and salt. (If you don't have a mortar and pestle, you can finely chop or press the garlic, and make the paste in a bowl.) Mash half of the chickpeas into the oil and garlic paste. Stir in the tahini, thyme, and half of both types of sesame seeds, if using. Taste; add more salt if needed.

Fill the mushrooms with the chickpea paste, then cover each with the remaining whole chickpeas. Drizzle with the remaining 1 teaspoon of olive oil and scatter with the remaining sesame seeds. Bake for 20 or 30 minutes, until the mushrooms are just tender when pierced with a fork.

Serve warm.
Serves 2.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

One stretch of the 105-mile Pfalz Wine Trail winds through the vineyards between Neuleiningen and Battenberg, Germany.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

The hiking route begins in Bockenheim. From Kaiserslautern, head towards Mannheim on autobahn A6. Exit at Gruenstadt and follow signs to Bockenheim or on to Neuleiningen.

TIMES

Open year-round. During the fall, the grape harvest is underway and many farmers sell bushels of freshly-picked apples by the roadside. From September to mid-October, Neuer Wein is in season, a young wine usually made out of white grapes that ripen early and served as it begins to ferment, yielding a high-sugar, low-alcohol content.

COSTS

Euros for food and drinks.

FOOD

Most villages along the Pfalzer Weinstieg have small restaurants that serve regional specialties as well as wineries open for wine and perhaps a small bite to eat. Hours vary, especially during the week.

INFORMATION

This website details the 11 stages of the trail and what to expect in terms of difficulty and hiking time: tinyurl.com/yy2rjrf

— Jennifer H. Svan

Walk in wine country

Pfalz Wine Trail winds through Germany's vineyards, forests

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The German Wine Route is billed as the country's oldest scenic drive, winding 50 miles through the wine villages of the Pfalz region.

But for wine lovers with a love for nature and able knees, there's something even better than driving the wine route: hiking it.

The Pfalz Wine Trail, or weinsteig, goes from Bockenheim, about 28 miles northeast of Kaiserslautern, to Schweigen-Rechtenbach on the French border. It follows the same start and end points as the paved route, traversing from the western edge of the Rhine Valley to the hills of the Pfalz Forest.

The path for walkers covers more than twice the distance, as it meanders through vineyards, villages and forest, past castle ruins and wineries that comprise the second-largest wine-growing region in Germany.

The most detail I found on the trail was on komoot, a navigation app for hikers and bikers. It divides the trail into 11 stages, with most sections less than 12 miles in length.

I chose the second leg between Neuleiningen and Bad Duerkheim, an 11.2-mile trek described as difficult, with more than 1,200 feet of elevation gain and the longest stage of the trail. Along with a friend, who hopped on the train from Oppenheim to meet me on a brilliant-blue



When hiking Germany's Pfalz Wine Trail, look for these red-and-white markings, which can be found on trees, rocks and other landmarks.

morning on the last day of summer, we started our adventure in the nearly 800-year-old castle town of Neuleiningen.

Neuleiningen is a hilltop town, its castle ruins impossible to miss from the A6 autobahn on the way to Mannheim. From the castle's observation tower on a clear day, you can see as far as Ludwigshafen and Frankenthal.

It would be easy to wander for hours along the village's narrow cobblestone streets past half-timbered houses that look straight out of a fairy tale. Two museums — the Museum of the Mint and the Leiningerland Museum in the castle tower — showcase medieval town and rural life.

But with many miles to cover, we headed to the trail. We picked it up behind the 13th century St. Nikolaus castle chapel, walking down a steep hill, across a road and up another steep incline into the forest. The trail was well-

marked and easy to follow as we walked through vineyards and apple orchards on the way to Battenberg.

After a steep climb under the sun into Battenberg, we found a place to sit along the outer walls of the castle's ruins and guzzled some water, while wishing the gourmet restaurant on-site was open. The town center didn't hold Neuleiningen's charm, but we were delighted to find the Hahn Pahlke winery, run by a family that has been producing award-winning wine for more than 150 years. Two half-full glasses of a rose and chenin blanc came to only 5 euros.

From there, the trail passes fancy homes before diverging into the forest for 5 miles, where the next stop is the Lindemannsrube Forest House. It's a restaurant at 1,500 feet above sea level, where you can rest your feet and enjoy some traditional Pfalz food and beverages.

Bad Duerkheim is another 3 miles. Our plan heading out was to get as far as we could and turn back with enough time to get home to feed dinner to hungry kids. With that leg of the trail estimated to take more than five hours without stops, we looped back after several hours before reaching Bad Duerkheim. But if you don't feel like retracing your steps, you can take a train from Bad Duerkheim to Gruenstadt and then catch a bus back to Neuleiningen.

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Red grapes look ready to burst on the vine along the Pfalz Wine Trail.



This half-timbered house stands in the 800-year-old wine village of Neuleiningen, Germany, the starting point of the second and longest stage of the Pfalz Wine Trail.



Looking for a bite to eat?

CHECK OUT THESE LOCAL EATERIES!

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 <p>QUACK Gasthaus & Biergarten</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We're Open ☑ Outdoor Seats ☑ Takeout Available ☑ Plaza Specialties <p>Entersweilerstr. 74, 67657 Kaiserslautern 0631 4 2828 www.quack-kl.de</p>	 <p>Chillers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Dine In ☑ Take Out ☑ American Bar & Grill <p>Bahnhofplatz. 1, 65189 Wiesbaden 0611-97441911 Chillers-wiesbaden.com</p>	 <p>EHRBAR BEST BURGER IN TOWN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Best Burger in Town ☑ Eat In ☑ Take Away ☑ Outdoor Seats <p>Tue-Sat, 17:00-21:00 Lauchstraße 1, 71032 Böblingen 07031 9896961</p>	 <p>Irish Pub GRAFENWOHR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We're Open ☑ Take Out / Eat In ☑ Taking Reservations ☑ Feel the Irish! <p>09641 9160622 Marktplatz 33, 92655 Grafenwöhr facebook.com/Irish-Pub-Grafenwöhr</p>
 <p>Zimblüte</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We're Open ☑ Air-Conditioned ☑ Homemade Iced Teas ☑ Sushi, Pho, & General Tso's <p>0631 58047 Welierbacher Str. 110, 67661 Einsiedelhof www.facebook.com/Zimblüte KMC</p>	 <p>BURGER KING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Dine in ☑ Take Out ☑ Delivery <p>Wiesbaden Shopping Center</p>	 <p>HOTEL Restaurant Zum Reussenstein</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Swabian Food ☑ Renowned TV chef ☑ Hotel & Restaurant <p>Kalkofenstraße 20, 71032 Böblingen Sa: 12:00-15:00, M-Su, 18:00-22:00 07031 66000 www.reussenstein.com</p>	 <p>RESTAURANT OLYMPIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We're Open ☑ Outdoor Seats ☑ 10% Off Pick-Up ☑ Reservations <p>0961 62519 Frauenrichter Str. 173, 92637 Weiden i.d.OPf. www.olympia-weiden.de</p>
 <p>Legends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Burgers/Wings/Ribs ☑ Delivery/Take-out ☑ Private Parties ☑ Sunday Brunch <p>0176 877 20 326 Am Lanzenbusch 40; 66877 Ramstein facebook.com/LegendsRamstein</p>	 <p>da NINOS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Steinofenpizza, Selbstgemachte Pasta ☑ Fleisch, Fisch und vieles mehr... ☑ Frisch und Gesund das ist unsere Küche <p>www.ristorante-daninos.de Borsigstrasse 32, 65205 Wiesbaden 06122 534 0370</p>	 <p>STADT CAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Breakfast ☑ Lunch Specials ☑ Terrace Seating <p>M-F 8:30-18:00, Sa 9:00-18:00 Turmstrasse 6, 71083 Holzgerlingen 07031 414777 www.dasstadtcafe.de</p>	 <p>Crazy Nates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We're Open ☑ We Deliver ☑ Taco Tuesdays ☑ Authentic Mexican Food <p>0911 384 382 66 Untere Zwinger Str 9 & Kirchenweg 38, Nuernberg www.crazynates.de</p>
 <p>burgerme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We're Open ☑ We Deliver ☑ Gourmet Burgers ☑ Many Options <p>0631 89 000 111 Plaffplatz 10; 67655 Kaiserslautern www.burgerme.de</p>	 <p>Oishii sushi & grill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Dine In ☑ Take Out ☑ Order via the iPad <p>Taunusstraße 22, 65183 Wiesbaden 0611 23835808 (reservations recommended)</p>	 <p>Hausbrauerei Mönchswasen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Brewery ☑ Beer Garden ☑ Restaurant ☑ Takeaway <p>Im Mönchgraben 30, 75397 Simmozheim M-F 17:00-23:00, Sa 16:00-Midnight, Su 11:00-22:00 07033 809030 www.moenchswasen.com</p>	 <p>Anastasia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We're Open ☑ Visa/MC ☑ Reservations ☑ Delicious Greek Specialties <p>09641 929955 Im Markwinkel 1, 92655 Grafenwöhr www.anastasia-grafenwoehr.de</p>
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 <p>Debelgianbistro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ M-Sa 16:00-23:00 ☑ Beer Garden ☑ New Location ☑ Burger Eaters Paradise <p>06374 944 0144 Jahnstrasse 30; 67686 Mackenbach facebook.com/debelgianbistro</p>	 <p>3 MOHREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Dine In ☑ Take Out ☑ Micro-Brewery ☑ Tours Available <p>Otto-Suhr-Ring 27, 55252 Wiesbaden 06134 24999</p>	 <p>3 MOHREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Turkish Food ☑ Eat In / Takeaway ☑ Daily Lunch Specials ☑ Sunday Brunch <p>M-F 11:30-15:00, 17:30-24:00 • Sa 17:30-24:00 • Su 09:30-24:00 Lange Straße 25, 71063 Sindelfingen 07031 677275 www.3mohren.com</p>	 <p>LA CORONA RESTAURANT & BAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Wine Tastings ☑ Regional Cuisine ☑ Opens Sept 24 ☑ Reservations Required <p>20 Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Platz, 91522 Ansbach Th-Sa, 18:00-10:00, or by appointment 0981 9090130 www.lacorona.de</p>

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific

The landscape of dreams

A day trip to Mount Mitake near Yokota transports visitors to another realm

By ERICA EARL
Stars and Stripes

As you make your way on a hilly trail canopied by greenery, you come across a small village. After a traditional Japanese tea, the winding path leads you to a beautiful staircase to a scene of statues, vibrant architecture and misty mountain views.

While it might sound like a dreamscape, this outing is an easily accessible day trip in the Okutama region, just one hour away from Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, and tends to be less crowded than the popular Mount Takao.

Mount Mitake, one of the many highlights of the Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park, features a railway and hiking path that takes visitors on a journey through a tranquil forest, a charming small village and a shrine.

A trip to Mount Mitake can easily be made into a full-day visit, starting with the funicular up the steep incline.

The Mitake Tozan Railway costs 1,130 yen, about \$10.75, for a round-trip ticket and takes six minutes to make its way to the base of the trail. Visitors can purchase tickets with either cash or their Suica or PASMO transit cards.

I suggest sitting toward the back of the car facing outward to get the most of the sweeping views, as the sides and back of

the train offer more of a sightseeing opportunity than the very small window to the tracks at the front of the train.

Much of the appeal of the winding, meandering 1 1/2-mile hike from the train station to Musashi Mitake Shrine is the whimsical sensation of feeling like you are walking somewhere untouched and unexplored by outsiders rather than on a predetermined path.

In addition to the natural beauty, the mountain and its shrine have historical and spiritual significance.

About two-thirds of the way to the shrine, the trail leads through a small, two-street village. The homes in the village and on the path to the peak of Mitake are mostly occupied by Shinto priest families who are caretakers for the park and shrine. Since the Edo period, locals have considered the hike up Mount Mitake to be a sacred pilgrimage.

The shrine and spaces around it boast a variety of wolf statues, making it a popular spot for visitors to bring their dogs. The appearances of wolves around shrines dates to a legend from year A.D. 150. In the story,

Imperial Prince Yamatai Takeru was saved by a large, mysterious white wolf while battling an evil spiritual entity.

Mount Mitake's dedication to wolves is curious, however, because it was allegedly es-



PHOTOS BY ERICA EARL/Stars and Stripes

Canopied paths and lush green views await visitors atop Mount Mitake, Japan.

tablished before the legend of Takeru's otherworldly acts of heroism.

In addition to the stunning red and gold Musashi Mitake is the Ubuyasusha, a humble yet beautiful wooden shrine believed to bring health, ease and happiness to families raising a child.

After paying respect to the shrines and appreciating the views from the mountaintop, visitors can rest and meditate in the rock garden on the back side of the mountain before making the trip back down.

On the trip, keep an eye out for Japanese giant flying squirrels, although a sighting is rare. It was not fortunate enough to see one in the flesh and had to settle for painted and carved depictions of them in the village shops.

While the shrines are said to nourish the soul, there are several options on Mount Mitake for nourishing the body. On the sojourn to the summit, it is recommended to stop in one of the tea or noodle shops in the village.

earl.eric@stripes.com
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ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

About an hour by car from Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo. Google Plus code: Q4MX+5R Ome, Tokyo

TIMES

Open daily, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

COSTS

About \$10.75 for roundtrip adult ticket, \$3.40 for a roundtrip child ticket (school-age children), and \$2.50 for a roundtrip pet ticket

FOOD

Tea shops and noodle shops are available in the village toward the top of Mount Mitake. Shops at the train station at the base of the trail offer snack options.

INFORMATION

Phone: 0428-78-9363;

Online: mitaketozan.co.jp

— Erica Earl



Musashi Mitake Shrine on Mount Mitake in Japan is intricate in design and features depictions of wolves in its details.



Visitors can shop and eat at the small village that sits along the journey to the top of Mount Mitake, Japan.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific



PHOTOS BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ/Stars and Stripes

Ikeda Spicy Noodle specializes in tantanmen-style ramen with five levels of heat to choose from near Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

IKEDA SPICY NOODLE

Location: Address: 1-12 Wakamat-sucho, Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture Suwa Building 1F
Directions: A five-minute walk from either of Yokosuka-chuo Station's exits.
Hours: 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5-11 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday. Closed Monday
Prices: A basic bowl of noodles with no additions is 900 yen, about \$8.60.
 — Christian Lopez



Flames indicate the heat levels available, so all tolerances are accommodated.

Warm comfort on a cool day

Choose from 5 levels of heat at Ikeda Spicy Noodle in Yokosuka

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

With the lingering heat of summer finally at its end, a chill has crept back around, providing the perfect opportunity to turn to a bowl of ramen as your extra warming layer.

Ikeda Spicy Noodle near Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan, two blocks outside Yokosuka-chuo Station, serves tantanmen style ramen, which is a take on Sichuan dandan noodles. Similar to the familiar Japanese ramen, tantanmen ramen contains thicker noodles, pork mince bits, bean sprouts, green onions, bok choy and a spicy chili soup for the base.

Upon arrival to the English-friendly restaurant, you order via a vending



machine like most other ramen establishments. Prices vary from 900 yen, about \$8.60, for a large bowl of spicy tantanmen noodles, up to 1,200 yen, or \$11.40, for an extra-large bowl. The menu at the machine has English translations. At the machine, you'll decide what noodles you'll want, how large a portion, white or fried rice, and options such as extra noodles, chashu pork or a seasoned egg, and most importantly, the spicy level.



As at most ramen establishments in the area, to place an order at Ikeda Spicy Noodle, diners enter their choices in a kiosk that creates a printout for the cook.

There are five overall levels of spice to choose from, level one containing hardly any spice and level five sure to leave you drenched in sweat.

After printing your ticket, the server will seat you at either the counter near the cook or at one of two tables that can seat up to four people. Ikeda quickly reaches full capacity throughout lunch, so be sure to arrive early for a hearty bowl of spicy ramen.

After a quick 10 minutes you can expect your large bowl of tantanmen ramen in front of you, depending on how busy Ikeda

is at the time. If a bowl of rice was ordered alongside your ramen, expect to see it in half the time.

When eating tantanmen ramen, there are two ways to tackle the spicy noodles: You can either mix the rice in the ramen or drizzle the thick chili oil broth over the rice.

As temperatures continue to drop, there's no better time to warm yourself up with the spicy stew-like broth of tantanmen ramen.

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 STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



TO WIPE OR NOT TO WIPE?

Experts say the risk of getting COVID-19 from contaminated surfaces is low

By GRACE DICKINSON
The Philadelphia Inquirer

If you were wiping down every single Amazon package, as of chickpeas and takeout container at the start of the pandemic, you certainly weren't alone. Clorox, the world's biggest maker of disinfectant cleaning materials, says it's still recovering from high demand of its popular disinfectant wipes, not expected to return to shelves until 2021.

In the beginning, we were all encouraged to take every precaution that we could. But do we still need to sanitize everything in sight?

With months of research now behind us, experts say the answer is probably not. Yet, that doesn't mean surfaces present zero risk. Here's how to approach things now.

Wash hands, not packages

By now, we know that the virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. And experts agree that your time is better spent washing your hands after you return from the grocery store than wiping down every item brought home. Why?

"While it's theoretically possible that there's fomite-related transmission — transmission through contaminated surfaces — we're not seeing any cases reported that are directly linked to that," says Patricia Henwood, associate professor of emergency medicine at Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Medical College and leader of the Emergency Medicine COVID-19 Task Force at Jefferson Health.

"Where people need to focus their energy on is hand-washing, masking and distancing," Henwood says.

When you're done putting your groceries away, wash your hands again. And then apply that same mindset to your home throughout your life.

Pumping gas? Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after. It's more effective, and more important, than later wiping down your steering wheel.

Experts say the likelihood of getting the coronavirus from a delivery box is low. But always remember to wash your hands before eating. If your hands are contaminated and you touch your face, you could get sick.

"There are only so many surfaces you can remember to sanitize anyway," says Thersa Sweet, associate teaching professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at Drexel University. "If you've touched something that has the virus on it, and you wash your hands, the virus is gone."

Low risk doesn't mean no risk

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that while it's possible you can get the coronavirus by touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching your face, "it's not thought to be the main way the virus spreads." But that doesn't mean the risk is zero.

"I don't want people to completely disregard the fact that the virus can be on surfaces," Sweet says. "Imagine someone coughs into their hand, they touch a doorknob, and you come by two minutes later and touch the same doorknob, and then wipe your nose. You could become infected."

Hand-washing, and paying attention to what you touch, are still both important.

"Though the risk of surfaces causing transmission is low, you still want to be aware," says Dr. Eric Sachinwalla, medical director of Infection Prevention and Control at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia. "And there are other illnesses where it could be more of a concern, especially with flu season coming up."

What's worth wiping down

Experts say it's a good idea to regularly wipe down your cellphone. And if someone else borrows it, then you definitely should.

"It's like when you wear a cloth mask to the grocery store and you wash it before using it again because there could be virus particles on the outside — your phone could be the same way, particularly because it's up

against your face," Sweet says.

You may also want to disinfect your doorknobs, especially if you share an entrance with others outside of your household. And if you're returning to an office or sharing equipment, elevate your cleaning efforts.

But again, the surface you need to be most concerned about is the one on your hands.

Someone sick? Return to high alert

Step up your cleaning game if someone in your household was, or may have been, exposed to COVID-19. This includes if you aren't experiencing symptoms but are awaiting test results.

In the event someone tests positive or gets sick, try to minimize their contact with shared surfaces. Keep them in one room, if possible, and avoid sharing a bathroom if you have a spare.

"Be more aggressive with cleaning, especially in areas where the sick person is living," Sachinwalla says. "Once they start feeling a little better, wash their sheets and towels regularly — you don't have to throw them away, just wash them. And then make sure you're wiping any horizontal surfaces where droplets could have spread."

Just as it is in a hospital, everything should be regularly wiped down in any high-risk setting.

No need to wipe credit cards

Coronavirus advice is ever-evolving. While it may have felt a little ridiculous to sanitize your credit card after every public transaction, you don't have to feel silly for having done so. And health experts were never trying to trick you.

"This is a novel area of science, and of course at the beginning when we know less, we want to take as much precaution as possible," Henwood says. "We're trying to learn as much as we can, as fast as we can, and when we have more data, that's what leads us to change our guidance. That will continue to happen as we have more data and testing."

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

It's a jungle in here

Add some green to your indoor space with these 10 hanging houseplants

By LISA BOONE
Los Angeles Times

A longtime bohemian standard during the 1970s, hanging houseplants have returned in a big way as demand for plants has skyrocketed during the pandemic and Instagram influencers create indoor jungles.

Plant parents love to dote on their houseplants, especially now that everyone is hunkering down at home, but are all indoor plants well suited to hanging?

Bloomscape.com's resident plant expert Joyce Mast advises evaluating your home and lifestyle before choosing a houseplant to hang in your home.

"What kind of light will your plant enjoy?" Mast asked. "How much time will you have to take care of its needs? And are you able to reach the plant (to water) once it is hanging in your home?"

From fast-growing philodendron to trailing spider plants, here are varieties that will do well in baskets and macrame hangers.



iStock photos

Above: Houseplants hang in buckets from a rod attached to the wall, creating a curtain of green.
Below: The variegated leaves on the Philodendron hederaceum create a striking pop of color in an indoor space.

Silver satin pothos (*Scindapsus pictus*)

In the wild, a *Scindapsus* plant can climb as high as the crown of a tree, while indoors, it can grow up to 6 feet tall. "This trailing plant enjoys low to bright indirect light areas, is very easy to care for, and looks lovely as a hanging plant as its patterned silvery green leaves drape over," Mast said. Tip: Feel free to take a cutting from this one and share at plant swaps as they are easy to propagate. If vines grow too long, simply cut back the stems in the spring just below a healthy leaf.

Heartleaf philodendron (*Philodendron hederaceum*)

This popular philodendron features distinctive pointed tips and can be grown as a climber or a trailing vine. "These fast-growing heart-shaped plants enjoy low to bright indirect light areas and are very easy to care for — they're happy in most areas of the home," said Mast. Tip: This plant can handle its soil drying out from time to time. Just water it thoroughly and then hang it back up. As a quick grower, it is an excellent choice for the trailing-plants-as-curtains look.

Philodendron hederaceum 'Brasil'

This variety of the popular heartleaf philodendron features beautiful yellow and lime green leaves that look dramatic cascading from bookshelves and hangers. Mast likes it as a "fast-growing, vining plant that is very easy to care for and will thrive in low to bright indirect light." Tip: If it gets long and leggy, simply pinch it back for a fuller look.

Neon prayer plant (*Maranta*)

Hardy *Maranta* earned its common name because of the way its leaves close at nightfall. "This vibrant plant stands out with bright green oval leaves and a herringbone-like pattern of light yellow veining," said Mast. "The colorful foliage makes this a perfect plant for windowsills or shelves that need a splash of color." Tip: *Maranta* thrives in humid conditions, so it's a good idea to give it a light mist every few days.

Wandering dude (*Tradescantia zebrina*)

This striking purple plant, now commonly known as the Wandering dude plant, is easy to care for, fast-growing, and will trail quickly. It can also take some



direct sunlight if necessary. Tip: Pinch back the long vines at a joint on the stem to encourage branching as it can become leggy with bare stems. Because it is a plant that prefers a slightly more humid environment, this is a good choice for bathrooms and kitchens.

Hoya ovata

Hoyas have thick, waxy leaves, are great climbers, and prefer bright, indirect light. With their striking trailing leaves, hoyas are perfect for bookshelves, mantles and hangers. Tip: Group a variety of hoyas in a row (other popular varieties include *Hoya kerrii* and *Hoya carnosa*) to make a statement.

String of Bananas (*Curio radicans*)

Native to South Africa, this succulent features distinctive banana-shaped foliage, also known as "fish hooks," and is a good choice for sun-drenched south-facing windows. Tip: String of Bananas is prone to aphids, so watch the tips of the plants for insects.

String of Pearls (*Curio rowleyanus*)

String of Pearls, formerly known as *Senecio rowleyanus*, is a popular trailing plant with pea-shaped leaves. It loves heat and indirect sunlight, but can tolerate lower light if necessary. As a drought-tolerant succulent, water String of Pearls when the soil is dry. Tip: The attractive stems can break off easily, so install it in a place with limited traffic.

Spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)

Spider plants, sometimes called airplane plants because of their arching leaves and floating plantlets, grow well in hanging baskets. They prefer bright, indirect light, but too much sun can scorch their leaves. Water regularly and allow to dry out in between feedings. Tip: Propagate single plantlets by removing them from the stem and rooting them in water. When roots are an inch long, transfer them to potting soil.

Baby's tears (*Pilea depressa*)

This delicate plant creates a stunning mat of creeping stems that prefer moist, well-drained soil in a part shade to full shade location. They are thirsty plants and require frequent watering. Tip: Baby's tears thrive in humidity, so they are an ideal choice for steamy kitchens and bathrooms.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

20

ALBUMS
TO ANTICIPATE
THIS FALL

Los Angeles Times

With large-scale tours and festivals nowhere in sight, getting pumped about new music means getting pumped about fall's upcoming albums. Fortunately, there are plenty to stoke our excitement, from the highly anticipated debut by K-pop's biggest girl group to a timely return from a veteran club queen. Here are the 20 LPs we can't wait to hear.

The Neighbourhood, "Chip Chrome & the Mono-Tones" (Sept. 25)

A character-driven concept album is a counterintuitive conceit for a rock band in the age of TikTok. But the Neighbourhood are more in tune with modern tastes than most, and their R&B-influenced, big-budget indie sound has proved both adept and incredibly popular with Gen Z years into their career. Singles like "Devil's Advocate" and "Cherry Flavoured" show how the band can still carve room for ambitious rock around the top charts.

— August Brown

Sufjan Stevens, "The Ascension" (Sept. 25; review on Page 33)

Two years after the exquisitely wispy "Mystery of Love" (from "Call Me By Your Name") carried him to the Oscars, Stevens has returned with a furious and densely arranged electro-folk album about what he views as the "diseased" state of American culture in the age of Trump.

— Mikael Wood

SuperM, "Super One" (Sept. 25; review on Page 33)

A K-pop supergroup featuring members of EXO, SHINee, NCT127 and WayV, Super M was built with the express purpose of producing the biggest records and stadium shows possible. They got there almost immediately with the instantly meme-able techno-pop single "Jopping" and a Billboard 200-topping EP, and now they've dropped a full-length debut, preceded by a pair of high-octane singles, "100" and "Tiger Inside." (AB)

Blackpink, "Blackpink: The Album" (Oct. 2)

When the four members of Blackpink walked offstage at Coachella in April 2019 — the first K-pop girl group to perform there — everyone who keeps up with the genre expected them to sweep the U.S. in a matter of months. A turbulent 18 months delayed their ascent, however, as the Burning Sun scandal upended their Korean label YG and COVID-19 put a stop to touring. Now after months spent tweaking the record, they've finally popped the cork on their full-length rap and electro-pop-influenced debut. With singles like the smash "How You Like That?" and the Selena Gomez collab "Ice Cream," it's as surefire a hit as anything in K-pop without BTS on the cover. (AB)

North Americans, "Roped In" (Oct. 9)

Los Angeles guitarist Patrick McDermott's first album for Jack White's Third Man imprint expands on ideas set forth on North Americans' previous album, "Going Steady." An instrumental record inspired by the so-called American primitive guitar style developed by John Fahey, "Roped In" sees McDermott teaming with pedal steel guitarist Barry Walker, fellow guitar traveler William Tyler and harpist Mary Lambert. Taken together, the nine songs offer a meditative respite.

— Randall Roberts

Loudon Wainwright III, "I'd Rather Lead a Band" (Oct. 9)

The veteran singer, songwriter and actor Wainwright is best known for his insightful, painfully honest folk-based songs. Rather than update his sound for millennials, "I'd Rather Lead a Band" travels back to Wainwright's big-band-era youth. In conference with noted music supervisor Randall Poster, Wainwright follows into the Great American Songbook, rounded up a big band and went to work. The aim, according to advance notes, was to explore songs that his parents used to have on when Wainwright was a kid "sitting at the top of the stairs while they danced together before going out on dates." (RR)

Open Mic Eagle, "Anime, Trauma, Divorce" (Oct. 16)

The Chicago-born, LA-based rapper, thinker and costar of Comedy Central's "The New Negroes" is one of the most insightful lyricists in the business. His previous album, "Brick Body Kids Still Daydream," explored his life growing up in a South Chicago housing project. In announcing "Anime, Trauma, Divorce," the artist explained the thematic genesis: "S--- had gone haywire personally and professionally and my therapist had to remind me that I have an outlet to process some of my s--- in rap music." (RR)

Various Artists, "The Harry Smith B-Sides" (Oct. 16)

The Atlanta archival imprint Dust-to-Digital describes this set as "the closing of a collector's circle." Drawing on noted experimental filmmaker and music collector Harry Smith's famed 1951 six-album Folkways Records collection, "The Anthology of American Folk Music," producers compiled remastered versions of those folk, blues and country songs' B-sides. It features both the Carter Family's foundational rural twang and Mississippi John Hurt's sweet blues music; and mixes Southern Black jug bands with banjo-playing white coal miners. (RR)

Boy Pablo, "Wachito Rico" (Oct. 23)

Lovers of Cucco's overlooked 2019 "Para Mi" should check out this crafty bedroom-pop maestro from Norway, whose tender but jumpy music has a similar modern-retro vibe and sits in the same emotional register. His debut LP follows a string of singles and EPs — including the YouTube hit "Evertime" — that made Boy Pablo a welcome presence at music festivals around the world. (MW)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

Rose, from left, Jenni Kim, and Lisa of BLACKPINK perform at the Coachella Music & Arts Festival in Indio, Calif., in 2019. The first K-pop girl group to perform at Coachella is poised for a big hit with their full-length debut Oct. 2.

AP

WEEKEND: MUSIC



Danny Clinch

FROM PAGE 32

Gorillaz, "Song Machine: Season One – Strange Timez" (Oct. 23)

The latest from Damon Albarn's shape-shifting animated troupe is a collection of tunes created as part of his rolling multimedia Song Machine project. But the smart-alecky spirit and spooky-festive sound are classic Gorillaz, as is the delightfully random guest list, which includes Beck, Elton John, Schoolboy Q, St. Vincent, the Cure's Robert Smith and the late, great Tony Allen. (MW)

Bruce Springsteen, "Letter to You" (Oct. 23)

Springsteen tends to release albums right at moments of national crisis. His 2002 LP "The Rising" helped speak to the grief of 9/11, and "Letter to You" will no doubt be some kind of salve for the most divisive election in a generation. His 20th album, recorded in a five-day blitz with his longtime comrades in the E Street Band, betrays no signs of age. Recorded live at his New Jersey home studio, it's loud and passionate and maybe the last thing you'll be able to talk to your Republican dad about after November. (AB)

Sam Burton, "I Can Go With You" (Oct. 30)

With a high-lonesome wail that recalls Roy Orbison's, the Salt Lake City singer and songwriter Burton taps into an old, weird Americana sound filled with echo and longing. Issued by the crucial folk imprint Tompkins Square, Burton's debut album offers 11 emotionally deep, expertly produced country-rock songs, each with a timelessness that belies their newness. Need proof? Find the video for "Nothing Touches Me." (RR)

Stylistic chameleon
Elvis Costello worked with an ensemble that included trumpet, piano, woodwinds, cello and drums on "Hey Clockface."

Ray Di Pietro

**Bruce Springsteen convened the E Street Band for a whirlwind five-day recording session at his New Jersey home studio, and the end result is "The Boss' 20th album, "Letter to You," which is due Oct. 23.****Elvis Costello, "Hey Clockface" (Oct. 30)**

For his 33rd studio album (give or take) since 1977, the British bard went to Paris where, over two days just before the coronavirus ruined everything, he worked with an ensemble he named "Le Quintette Saint Germain." In addition to longtime collaborator Steve Nieve on piano, Costello gathered a trumpeter, a woodwind player, a cellist and a drummer. Recalled Costello in pre-release notes: "I sang live on the studio floor with the ensemble playing everything I wanted to hear and nothing that I didn't." (RR)

Rico Nasty, "Nightmare Vacation" (Oct. 30)

Like some wild convergence of Missy Elliott, Bjork, Danny Brown and Johnny Rotten, the marvelously in-your-face singer-rapper Rico Nasty delivers rhythmic fury while reveling in the performative requirements of her job. Last year's breakout mixtape, "Anger Management," found her collaborating with producer Kenny Beats. For her forthcoming follow-up, Nasty has wandered even further afield from the mainstream. The first single, "iPhone," is a collaboration with experimental pop duo 100 Geecs. (RR)

Kylie Minogue, "Disco" (Nov. 6)

If anyone deserves to capitalize on 2020's dance-pop revival, it's 52-year-old Kylie Minogue, who was pairing airy melodies and ecstatic grooves before Dua Lipa and Doja Cat were born. As if to prove the point, the Australian diva's latest — her follow-up to 2018's country-accented "Golden" — is called simply "Disco." (MW)

Chris Stapleton, "Starting Over" (Nov. 13)

Will country music's most impressively bearded traditionalist jump on the Fleetwood Mac bandwagon that's been rolling through Nashville of late? Seems unlikely — though Stapleton's new one does feature a cameo by Mike Campbell, the longtime Tom Petty sideman who stepped in for Lindsey Buckingham on Fleetwood Mac's last tour. (MW)

Josh Groban, "Harmony" (November)

America's cuddliest baritone is back this fall with a new studio album (his first since 2018's "Bridges") and a series of virtual concerts in which he plans to revisit his favorite show tunes and his most treasured holiday songs. As always with Groban, the music's quality will increase in direct proportion with how much of his oddball sense of humor he lets in. (MW)

The Avanches, "We Will Always Love You" (Dec. 11)

They took 16 years to follow up their landmark 2006 debut, "Since I Left You." But these dogged Australian crate-diggers are due back after a mere four years with their third LP, which promises more of the Avanches' intricate weaving of dusty samples and newly recorded vocals, in this case from the likes of Blood Orange, Denzel Curry and Weezer's Rivers Cuomo. (MW)

Benee, Title TBD (date TBD)

You know her from "Supalonely," her breezy TikTok hit that became an inadvertent quarantine jam a few months after it came out last year. Now 20-year-old Benee is looking to outlast quick-burn virality with a debut album showcasing her witty songwriting and her cool but yearning vocals. (MW)

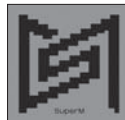
CNCO, Title TBD (date TBD)

Idiosyncratic Latin acts like Bad Bunny and Anuel AA proved you don't have to compromise to find global success, or gloss up your sound to appease Anglo tastes. But what if you put modern movimiento music in the tried-and-true package of a heartthrob pop band helmed by Simon Cowell? CNCO's 2018 self-titled album was the biggest Latin album debut in the U.S. that year, and while hits like "Reggaeton Lento" proved their mettle there, the R&B-driven "Prend" showed their range and ambitions for this long-delayed 2020 LP. (AB)

REVIEWS

SuperM

Super One
(SM Entertainment/
Capitol Records)



The K-pop group SuperM go big on their first studio album, "Super One," with familiar

rhythms but also bold choices. The newest septet on the block leans heavily on SM Entertainment's tried and tested manual of success, but with more English in the mix. While sub-groups are nothing new in K-pop, this supergroup's talent is nothing to be trifled with, its members hailing from EXO, SHINee, NCT 127 and WayV. The new album is a power music map to the nearest dance floor, with 15 addictive tracks to keep one busy till dawn.

Their most obvious influence in terms of sound is EXO's electric, cinematic pop (a genre unto itself, really). The singles "Tiger Inside" and "100" bring some of that unsettling energy to the fore. "Tiger Inside" has a distorted bass and tubular effects that try to emulate the sound of a roar, while "100" — co-written by band member Mark — sounds like Ötzi Prime found himself in some hot action.

"One (Monster & Infinity)" mixes pugacious R&B, trumpets and trap. "Line 'Em Up" finds its Middle Eastern groove with a happy flute. And "Together at Home" rocks with a retro '90s bass.

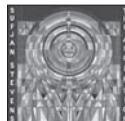
The few slow songs on the record don't drag things down: "So Long" is sensual, "Better Days" is an earnest piano ballad and "Wish You Were Here" has a mellow reggae flow.

Simply put, SuperM is super on "Super One."

— Cristina Jaleru
Associated Press

Sufjan Stevens

The Ascension
(Asthmatic Kitty)



Synthesized drums and dissected, distorted vocals open the upbeat electronic track "Lamentations" as Sufjan Stevens sings out: "I was only thinking of human kindness / I am the future, define the future."

This tenet carries through "The Ascension" as Stevens acknowledges the turmoil around him but resolves to rise above. It is a cautionary tale and a call to action. America may be burning, validation seeking may have become even further warped in a social-media age, but, as Stevens say in the press release accompanying the album, the time has come to "be part of the solution or get out of the way."

The 15-track "The Ascension" is one of Stevens' more produced albums (most close in sound to 2010's "The Age of Adz") and while the musical composition is highly experimental, the synth-pop album is accessible.

Following his last full-length, 2015's sparse and haunting "Carrie & Lowell," the change in tone and production is stark.

While the album explores an underlying current of righteous anger and helplessness, there are times the feelings are transformed into personal agency.

On "Tell Me You Love Me," which starts as a desperate plea for affection turns into resolve as the music flourishes and triumphant voices layer to sing: "I'm going to love you." The control doesn't have to lie in the hands of another. Stevens makes it his choice to move forward from a place of love.

— Ragan Clark
Associated Press

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Mafia nit

How 'Goodfellas' changed the mob's image

By JORDAN MICHAEL SMITH
Special to The Washington Post

In the late 1980s, Martin Scorsese was not yet Hollywood royalty. Coming off a string of commercial failures — the controversial “The Last Temptation of Christ” (1988) and “The King of Comedy” (1983), among them — he was preparing to release “Goodfellas,” but feared the worst. “I want to be a player,” he told a journalist while promoting the movie. “To be a player in Hollywood, you have to take a lot of bruising.”

But, as Glenn Kenny recounts in his book “Made Men: The Story of Goodfellas,” the pain would soon be behind him.

“Goodfellas” would cement Scorsese’s legacy and would go on to redefine not just the gangster movie but gangster television, too. “The Sopranos” creator David Chase called the 1990 film his “Koran,” and he used more than 25 of its actors for his show. Chase’s series launched the era of prestige dramas by expanding upon the film’s premise of the anti-hero mobster living everyday life.

Scorsese was unsure about facing another gangster film, having already directed “Mean Streets” (1973) and the gangster-adjacent “Raging Bull” (1980). However, he was smitten with “Wiseguy,” a 1985 bestselling nonfiction book by journalist Nicholas Pileggi. “Wiseguy” told

the story of Henry Hill, a New York mobster who had access to some higher-ups but worked mostly as a street-level “money man.” Precisely because Hill and his friends were made — official members of a crime family — they were freelancers with more liberty to act recklessly than the subjects of other mob books.

Scorsese grew up in an Italian community in Manhattan where the mob was a powerful, respected force. “Wiseguy” captured that environment well. According to a Los Angeles Times story, Scorsese called Pileggi and told him: “I just read your book. I’ve been looking for it for years,” a revealing statement unfortunately absent from “Made Men.” While the book succeeds in situating “Goodfellas” in Scorsese’s oeuvre, it misses some of how and why the film is so influential.

Scorsese intended to make a gangster picture that was, in some ways, an antidote to the myths of “The Godfather.” That legendary movie imbued the mob with an undeserved nobility and grandiosity. Francis Ford Coppola’s film suggested that mobsters were devoted to their



“Goodfellas,” a critical but not a lucrative hit in 1990, stars Joe Pesci, Ray Liotta and Robert De Niro.

families above all. “Goodfellas” suggested that, in fact, money overrode family, loyalty and everything else. “All that stuff in the film about honor, it’s a lot of nonsense; there’s no such thing,” Scorsese tells Kenny, in an interview relegated to a single chapter near the end of “Made Men.”

Kenny managed to track down Henry Hill’s brother Joe, who confirms that Henry was incurably addicted to drugs and alcohol and was vicious to his wife and family. With Ray Liotta in the lead role, Scorsese managed to make Henry likable by portraying him as a handsome voice of reason among his barbaric friends, played memorably by Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci. That artistic license endeared Henry to audiences, even as they watched him murder and steal.

Well, some audiences. Other viewers walked out of previews of “Goodfellas,” appalled at

its graphic and spontaneous violence, dark second half and nonjudgmental attitude toward its characters. Warner Bros. executives wanted the entire film reshot and recut, but Scorsese refused. And it was only a modest box office success, grossing \$50 million domestically on a \$20 million budget.

Critics adored “Goodfellas,” however. The film won awards at its premiere at the Venice Film Festival, and Roger Ebert called it the best mob movie ever made. It was nominated for six Oscars, and Pesci won the award for supporting actor. Among the Academy’s many historical flubs, best picture (for which “Goodfellas” wasn’t even in contention) went to the forgettable “Dances with Wolves,” which also won a best director prize for Kevin Costner.

Not that it affected “Goodfellas’” reputation. Its stature has

only grown as the decades pass. Kenny writes, “Its influence on other films is difficult to quantify.” Influence and criticism are always difficult to quantify, of course, but the film’s impact is apparent in “Trainspotting” (1996) and “American Hustle” (2013). And the works of Quentin Tarantino mimic “Goodfellas’” blend of humor and violence, distinctive camerawork, use of pop music, and lightning-speed editing and pacing. “A Bronx Tale” (1993), “Donnie Brasco” (1997) and “Blow” (2001) likewise employed elements of Scorsese’s film. Bill Hader tells Kenny that his show “Barry,” about a hitman-turned-actor, owes much to “Goodfellas.” And, of course, there’s “The Sopranos,” the show that changed everything.

Not bad for a film that some audiences initially fled from watching.

Rowling stirs up controversy with Galbraith’s ‘Troubled Blood’

By BILL SHEEHAN

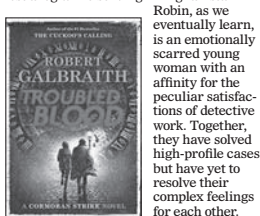
Special to The Washington Post

In an afterword to 2015’s “Career of Evil,” J.K. Rowling wrote that Robert Galbraith, her fictional alter ego, “has always felt like my own private playground.” On the evidence of “Troubled Blood,” the fifth and latest Galbraith novel, that playground has grown deeper and more commodious than ever. Weighing in at more than 900 pages, it is the longest, most ambitious novel she’s written to date. It is also the focus of a controversy that seems likely to divide the book’s many potential readers.

In her new book, Rowling has created a creepy serial killer who dresses in women’s clothes to more easily reel in his female victims. That decision has generated considerable outrage in light of comments Rowling made earlier this year that angered transgender rights activists. A question quickly arises: Is the creation of such a character a legitimate aesthetic choice, or is it an affront to the LGBTQ+ community? While I don’t intend to know the author’s motivations, I lean toward the former interpretation. Many others will no doubt passionately disagree.

“Troubled Blood” once again features Cormoran Strike and Robin Ellacott, partners in a London-based detective agency. Like the earlier books in the series, it is independent enough to stand on its own, but is best read as part of a long, ongoing

narrative whose backstory was first established in “The Cuckoo’s Calling” (2013). Strike is a former military policeman who lost a leg while serving in Afghanistan.



evolution of their personal relationship is one of the series’ central narrative threads.

As “Troubled Blood” begins, it is 2014 and the Strike detective agency is flourishing. Multiple investigations are underway, and several new players have been added to the cast of characters. Things change dramatically when Strike, during a visit to his childhood home in Cornwall, agrees to look into a decades-old mystery.

Nearly 40 years before, a local doctor named Margot Bambrorough left work and walked in the direction of a nearby pub, where she planned to meet a female friend for drinks. She never arrived. No

body was found, and no clues ever surfaced. Strike learns the bare facts of the case from Margot’s surviving daughter, Anna, who has never stopped hoping for an answer. It is the coldest of cold cases, one that is unlikely to ever be solved. Intrigued by the sheer impossibility of the case, Strike agrees to devote one year to the case.

The investigation that follows is the centerpiece of a wide-ranging novel filled with enough characters, incidents and alternating story lines to more than justify its exorbitant length. The mystery surrounding Margot’s disappearance deepens as the novel progresses, moving through a labyrinth of lies, misdirection, faulty memories and missing witnesses. Complicating matters is the fact that the initial investigating detective suffered a breakdown, using astrology and its peculiar logic as his primary investigative tool. (Bizarrely illustrated astrological charts are scattered throughout the text.) Forced to look beyond star charts and celestial influences for answers, Strike and Robin pursue a more earthbound investigation, one that will lead, after much frustration, to a solution that is at once sad and utterly unexpected.

“Troubled Blood’s” central mystery is a strong one, and watching it unfold over the course of a protracted investigation is one of the novel’s great pleasures. But Margot’s story is just one element of a

spacious narrative that has more than one story to tell. As the novel progresses, the two protagonists and their complex pasts come more into focus. Robin, whose history includes one failed marriage and the memory of sexual assault, is an admirable figure struggling to establish herself in a profession — and a world — dominated by men. Rowling also provides new insights into Cormoran Strike and the forces that have shaped him. The most significant of these are the death of his mother by drug overdose and his broken relationship with an absentee father, aging rock star Jonny Rokeby. The author pays as much attention to the quotidian details of her characters’ lives as she does to the drama at the novel’s heart.

Rowling’s greatest novelistic gifts are her ability to spin wild, intricate plots (witness the astrological elements of this latest book), and to create colorful, highly individual characters who come instantly alive on the page. Even the long-absent Margot Bambrorough takes on a distinctive presence as we come to know her through the reminiscences of coworkers and friends. Controversies to the side, Rowling remains that rarest of creatures: a natural, supremely confident storyteller. For more than one reason, “Troubled Blood” will surely be among the most widely read — and widely debated — novels of the season. Let the arguments begin.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

‘Relatable and grounded’

‘Julie and the Phantoms’ creator hopes audience can see themselves in show’s lead

By ASHLEY LEE
Los Angeles Times

Madison Reyes was only 18 months old when “High School Musical” first debuted, and her love for the franchise grew as she did. She’s seen the movies countless times; she’s collected all of the Barbie Dolls and stickers.

“I loved watching these kids sing and dance around their school,” recalled Reyes, now 16. “I was like, ‘I want to do that! What school I gotta go to to do that!’”

Fast forward to last year, when the Puerto Rican teen started a dance circle in a locker-lined hallway and crowd surfed inside a confetti-covered cafeteria. She did so as the star of Netflix’s “Julie and the Phantoms,” which premiered last month — the latest project from “High School Musical” mastermind Kenny Ortega and the first of his overall deal with the streaming service.

Reyes — a magnetic musical heroine with her textured voice and adorable gap-toothed smile — was cast for the demanding lead role from more than 700 self-taped auditions.

“I wanted someone whom everyone could watch and really recognize themselves in,” explained Ortega. “After watching her video, I knew Madison was the girl to beat. She has this raw talent that can take on any genre of music, and this promise of greatness that excited everybody. And yet she’s so relatable and grounded.”

Her credibility is crucial in the lead of any TV show, but especially one with a particularly imaginative premise. A remake of a 2011 Brazilian series, “Julie and the Phantoms” centers on a talented teen who, creatively paralyzed by the loss of her mother, meets a trio of musicians — who happen to be ghosts, having died in 1995. These specters magically become visible and audible to all whenever they perform with Julie as their lead singer.

Their musical numbers are the high notes of the season’s nine episodes, thanks to a monthlong “boot camp” of band rehearsals, a signature stage of any Ortega project.

“We like to think that we’re a band first, and then actresses and actors second,” said Reyes of her on-screen band mates, played by Charlie Gillespie, Jeremy Shada and Owen Joyner.



“Julie and the Phantoms” lead Madison Reyes collaborated with department heads on her character’s hair, makeup and costumes. Netflix

Banking the series’ believability on Reyes is a surefire bet because she and Julie are nearly one and the same — excluding Julie’s tolerance for bullying by the series’ resident mean girl, Reyes admitted. She collaborated with department heads on Julie’s hair (naturally textured and with minimal modifications), makeup (bare face, with pops of color as her confidence grows) and costumes (one of which is an on-screen tribute to Reyes’ mother). She even worked with Gillespie on one of the show’s 15 earworms, marking the first time she’s ever written a song with another artist.

Reyes, who looks up to Ariana Grande and Zendaya — both of whom also launched their multi-hyphenate careers by leading tween-facing TV shows — is proud to play Julie, but that doesn’t mean she’s without trepidations.

“I’m nervous about whether or not

people are going to fall in love with her, because I’m just like her,” she said while seated in her family dining room, decorated with her father’s paintings of Taino symbols and the Puerto Rican flag.

“She’s Latin American; she’s got textured hair; she’s a strong and independent female character,” continued Reyes, acutely aware that she carries the burden of representation at such a young age. “As a person of color who wants more diversity (on-screen), I’m kind of scared about the hate comments that I’ve seen other people have to go through, especially women. I’m not trying to think about that too much ... Don’t get me started on that kind of anxiety!”

Ortega has long believed that “Julie and the Phantoms” — both the series and the band of the same name — will find its fandom, as it was designed to be adaptable to other formats.

“I wanted to be able to put together a project that can go beyond television, that could tour and be a record,” he explained of the show’s pre-COVID plans. “Our imaginations were going wild with what could potentially happen, and now we have to step back and wait and hope the world will open up again.”

Until then, Reyes will resume being a teenager: finishing coursework for her junior year of high school, making earnings, watching anime and scrolling on Instagram and TikTok. Oh, and relishing the show’s three billboards around her hometown of Allentown, Pa.

“There’s one literally right down here by my house,” she told The Times excitedly. “It’s so surreal. I don’t know how to process it. It’s like, ‘That’s your face, Madison — you do understand that, right?’ Like, that’s me. And, oh my gosh, I kind of look good!”

Familiar fare like ‘Mandalorian,’ ‘Crown’ return with new seasons

By NEAL JUSTIN
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

You try telling “The Mandalorian” that he can’t go back to work. The Disney+ hero’s bromance with Baby Yoda picks up Oct. 30, as will the uncontrollable sobbing when NBC’s “This Is Us” gets back to its crying game Nov. 10.

A new season of “Fargo” (FX) shows off Chris Rock’s acting chops, while new episodes of “The Crown” (Nov. 15, Netflix) welcome Gillian Anderson as Margaret Thatcher.

Familiar faces will dominate projects that were well into production before the pandemic struck. The all-star list includes Jeff Daniels channeling former FBI Director James Comey for “The Comey Rule” (Showtime), “Big Bang” veteran Jim Parsons in a new adaptation of “The

Boys in the Band” (Netflix); Ethan Hawke as abolitionist John Brown in “The Good Lord Bird” (Oct. 4, Showtime); and Nicole Kidman, whose therapist in “The Undoing” (Oct. 25, HBO) must deal with a whole new array of big little lies.

The miniseries version of “The Right Stuff” (Oct. 9, Disney+) doesn’t have big names climbing into space-suits, but Leonardo DiCaprio is among the executive producers.

Steven Spielberg is overseeing a reboot of his 1990s cartoon series “The Animaniacs” (Nov. 20, Hulu), while fellow Oscar-winner Spike Lee directs the screen version of “David Byrne’s American Utopia” (Oct. 17, HBO).

That concert film could be the musical highlight of fall TV everywhere but Minnesota. That honor will likely go to “Clouds” (Oct. 16, Disney+), about Lakeland teen Zach Sobiech, whose inspirational song became a viral sensa-

tion before he succumbed to cancer in 2013.

As for nonscripted programming, get ready for “The Comedy Store” (Oct. 4, Showtime), a four-part series about the club that birthed the careers of Richard Pryor and Robin Williams; “Wild Card: The Downfall of a Radio Loudmouth” (Oct. 7, HBO), about New York sports talker Craig Carton; and “The Reagans” (Nov. 15, Showtime), a four-part profile.

Networks are filling several holes in the schedule by picking up shows that premiered on limited platforms. That means a bigger audience can check out Jessica Alba and Gabrielle Union in “L.A.’s Finest” (Fox), “Star Trek: Discovery” (CBS) and “One Day at a Time” (Oct. 12, CBS).

If after all that, you still feel like the Force isn’t with you, circle Nov. 17 on your calendar. That’s when Disney+ drops “The Lego Star Wars Holiday Special.”

WEEKEND: HEALTH AND FITNESS

Stretching your way to a pain-free life

Quarantine inertia makes flexibility workouts an important part of everyone's routine

By ELIZABETH HEATH

Special to The Washington Post

Stretching doesn't get the respect it deserves. Most exercisers absent-mindedly engage in just a few minutes of it before or after a workout, which certainly feels good but isn't enough to promote flexibility or any of stretching's other benefits. According to experts, stretching should be approached not only as a preview or addendum to other physical activity, but also as an essential standalone workout.

And it's especially important now. After months of quarantine inertia, stretching can be a low-impact, nonthreatening gateway to a more active lifestyle. For people working from home, it can relieve the discomfort of working from a kitchen table and chair in a makeshift home office. And for essential workers on the front lines of the pandemic, stretching can save tired backs and reduce discomfort and stress.

The benefits of stretching are widely accepted, and they include increased flexibility and range of motion, improved posture and for many, reduced back pain. A flexible body is more resistant to injury — whether from lifting weights or lifting a bag of groceries from the car trunk. But the kind of stretching most of us do isn't going to get us there.

"A lot of people misunderstand why they stretch," says Brad Walker, an athlete, coach and stretching expert.

Stretching as a warmup prepares your muscles to be worked out, and stretching as part of a cool-down helps them return to their pre-exercise state. Neither, according to Walker, has anything to do with increased flexibility. For that, he says, you need to set aside time to work

specifically on flexibility — and that means integrating dedicated stretching sessions into your weekly routine.

"Everyone has limited time for exercise," says Walker, who finds that his new clients are often reluctant to set aside an hour or more of their week "just" to do stretching. Psychologically, he says, people feel they're getting more bang for their buck if they work out hard and sweat a lot. But depending on the type and intensity, "you can fatigue yourself during a stretching session just as you would a gym workout, bike ride or run."

"It's called a flexibility workout because it's a workout," says Natasha Nikolaeva, who, with her sister, created StretchIt, which offers subscribers online stretching routines. By swapping a regular workout with a stretching workout one or more days a week, users are still actively engaging their muscles and building strength, flexibility and range of motion.

"They're not 'losing' anything by missing a workout; they're actually gaining," continues Nikolaeva, who asserts that, at 39, she's healthier and more flexible now than she was at 25. "Besides, I sweat when I stretch!" Walker and Nikolaeva both say that stretching can yield significant pain relief, especially for age-related discomfort that so many people think they just have to live with.

A body that's strong and flexible is simply more comfortable, says Nikolaeva, who uses the analogy of a commercial airplane.

"If I'm sitting in coach, I'm getting there, but I'm not comfortable. But if I move to business class, I feel a lot better. It's the same airplane going to the same place," she says, "but I'm not in pain anymore."

When the pandemic hit, legions of office workers switched to work-from-home setups, and for many, that meant a lot less moving around.

Karen Litzky, a physical therapist in private practice in New York City, says remote work has robbed us of much of our seemingly insignificant daily movement. Walking to the subway or bus stop, taking the stairs, walking to the conference room, leaving the office to go to lunch — all seems so 2019.

"With Zoom meetings and phone calls, often back to back, we lose the ability to just stand up and walk around," Litzky says. "People are staying in one position for way too long."

Couple this with less-than-ideal workspaces — those kitchen tables as makeshift desks, for example — and it's a recipe for stiffness and back pain. Pressure on a joint, lack of blood flow, stiffness — these are all signals from our body that it's time to move.

Litzky, who has been conducting telehealth sessions from home since March, says she has learned a lot by watching her cat: "Even in his sleep, he moves every 20 to 30 minutes." She says we should take a cue from pets and toddlers: "They never stay still for very long."

There are a few tricks to making sure you move and stretch enough while working from home, including getting up and walking around, or even lying on the floor while on a phone call.

Walker suggests setting up a couple of different work areas and moving from space to space throughout the day. Whether it's standing at the kitchen counter, 30 minutes on the couch or sitting at the dining room table, "just move the laptop somewhere else," he says, "before hours have gone by and you don't even realize it."

Litzky suggests a stretch you can sneak in during a Zoom meeting: Drop one leg off the side of your chair and extend it behind you with your knees bent and the top of your foot face down on the floor. The farther back you slide your foot, the more stretch you'll get in your hip and thigh. Shift to the other side of the chair and stretch the other leg.

"To your Zoom colleagues," she says, "it'll just look like you're repositioning yourself in the chair" — or getting antsy for the meeting to end.

You can also try extending one leg in front of you with your heel on the ground. Lean forward from the hip with your back straight and stretch your leg and hip.

"You don't have to bend over," Litzky says, "and it looks like you're leaning into the conversation even more."

Nikolaeva sees a silver lining in the WFH cloud.

"It's positive in that we can actually stretch more," she says. She suggests using time that might be spent at the proverbial water cooler to do some stretching instead.

"I might be embarrassed to roll out a mat in the middle

of the office," she says, "but at home, I can do a quick 15-minute stretching session and use this time to get the most out of a sad situation."

Not everyone is working from home, nor are they all sitting the entire day. Essential employees, from medical personnel to sanitation and postal workers, are used to being on their feet all day; the pandemic hasn't slowed things down for them. Sore backs, knees, shoulders and feet come with many of these jobs. Yet even when more movement feels unappealing, sneaking in a few minutes of stretching during the day can make a big difference.

"If 10 minutes is all you've got," Nikolaeva says, "at least that's something. And if you can do 10 minutes three times a day, even better."

If you can't stretch until you go home, Walker says to wait until bedtime and stretch 15 to 20 minutes before lights out. (He offers free stretching tips on his website, stretchcoach.com. The American Physical Therapy Association also offers a free 30-minute home stretching program at choosept.com.)

Regardless of your line of work or your work site, experts agree that stretching can also help alleviate some of the stress of these extraordinary times because of its effect on our posture and breath.

"One benefit of stretching is that it improves posture," Walker says. "And that opens up the chest, improves breathing and increases oxygen in the blood."

People tend to hold their breath when they're under stress, he adds, and stretching also helps us remember to breathe more deeply and regularly.

And doing so, Litzky says, activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which reduces anxiety and stress: "That's all the good stuff that helps calm us down."



iStock photos



WEEKEND: FAMILY

Home-school haven

More families opting for home schooling, especially after virtual experiences

BY MADDIE HANNA
AND KRISTEN A. GRAHAM
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Katy Rene knew she didn't want to send her 6-year-old into a classroom this year, given that she and her husband rely on their parents — who are more vulnerable to the coronavirus — to help care for their children while they work.

But Rene wasn't excited by the prospect of her daughter spending hours in front of a screen for virtual learning, having watched her disengage during Zoom kindergarten classes this spring. So she decided to home-school.

"It really is very flexible," said Rene, who un-enrolled her child from the Penndridge School District in Bucks County, Pa.

The pandemic has driven an increasing number of parents around the region and the country to give new consideration to home schooling, spurred by uncertainty about school schedules and aversion to virtual learning programs.

Tracking the growth of home schooling is difficult. In Pennsylvania, officials say they don't have data for the current school year, while in New Jersey, the state doesn't track it at all.

But people connected with the home-school community say they've seen a surge in interest.

When districts began announcing their plans for the fall, the National Home School Association "started getting a deluge of calls," said J. Allen Weston, the group's executive director. "We had to expand our inbox two different times to accommodate all the emails."

National numbers on home schooling are unreliable, Weston said — 26 states require little to no notification if families choose to home-school, and so don't even keep statistics. Weston believes that, in a typical year, four million children are home-schooled, but that this year, that figure will swell to almost 10 million.

Susan Richman, who pushed to legalize home schooling in Pennsylvania in 1988, said she's hearing from families that weren't necessarily happy with public schools before. The pandemic "is the kick in the seat of the pants" to try home schooling, she said.

Home-schoolers made up 1.4% of public school enrollment in Pennsylvania in 2018, numbering about 2,000 kids. Families opting to home-school must submit affidavits to their school districts. Some other states, such as New Jersey, have no such requirement.

Advocates consider Pennsylvania among the most highly regulated states for home-schooling, with state-mandated subjects, standardized test requirements and rules that parents have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Parents must have their children assessed by a certified home-school evaluator each year. New Jersey's requirements are looser.

Rene, a former middle school teacher, it all seemed doable. She's



DAVID MIALETTI, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

Elizabeth Dukart talks with her son, Matthew, 6, as Sam, 9, works in the background during a home-schooling session on their lawn in Cherry Hill, N.J. Dukart pulled her kids from Cherry Hill public schools to home-school them during the pandemic.

required to keep a portfolio marking her daughter's progress, and to log school days — 180 are required. "If you bake something together, or go on a nature walk, they count as home-school days," Rene said.

She aims to spend an hour a day on more formal instruction. "I sort of figure if she reads every day, practices writing and does some math, whatever else we do is a bonus," she said.

She was also able to obtain textbooks from her daughter's elementary school — which Pennsylvania requires districts to offer home-school families.

Rene, who plans to re-enroll her daughter "when the time is right," wanted her to maintain a connection to her school, including through such routines as reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

"We fully support public education," Rene said. "It was really important to me that we not take away resources from the public school," including by enrolling in a cyber charter, which districts must pay for students to attend.

That's not the case for home-schoolers, although school districts could see their state subsidy shrink in future years if students un-enroll. While Pennsylvania funds schools primarily through local property taxes, districts also receive state funding based on enrollment, as in New Jersey.

Officials have said online learning this fall will be far improved from when the pandemic abruptly closed schools in the spring. But a number of parents choosing to home-school said their experiences with virtual instruction were too frustrating. Elizabeth Dukart's two children are hands-on learners, and a spring spent learning virtually through their Cherry Hill public school was tough.

"We managed, and I know the teachers worked hard to make it just wonderful as they could, but I just feel like it didn't work for our family," Dukart said. "They're all still trying to figure out what to do."

She opted to home-school.

"The boys are loving it," Dukart said of her first and fourth graders. "Their handwriting is neater; their spelling is better. They're learning so much."

A history lesson about ancient Rome might turn into a cooking lesson, with a nod to her 9-year-old's dream of opening a restaurant someday. A frank conversation about people experiencing homelessness turned into a service learning project making food for the homeless.

A former teacher, Dukart had previously considered home schooling, but dismissed it — perceiving a stigma around home schooling as old-fashioned or "not on par" with traditional schooling.

Now, her family is in the process of converting their basement to a classroom, with an eye toward continuing to home-school even after the pandemic.

"We don't like that the coronavirus happened, but home schooling was such a good decision for us," Dukart said.

Richman, the longtime advocate who conducts annual evaluations for home-school families, said the "lines are blurrier" today around how people home-school.

"It's definitely not just families living on farms," she said. Now, home-schoolers might be students taking a couple classes from their local school.

Whatever their plans, Richman expects that some parents new to home schooling will continue after this year.

"I know a whole lot of home-schoolers who only thought they were going to do this for one year," she said.

Rene intends to send her daughter back to her school district.

But she sees the upcoming year as an opportunity to bond in a different way.

"It might end up being a special experience, when everything else around us is so unpredictable and difficult and challenging," she said.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



PopSockets, passwords and a perplexed parent

"You empty a bag of Utz's Dark Russet potato chips onto a cookie sheet ..." I began, explaining an easy appetizer recipe I'd learned from a friend. "Then you sprinkle crumbled Gorgonzola cheese over ..."

"Rusty potato chips?" my mother asked, turning her good ear toward me.

"No Mom, RUSSET potato chips," I replied, enunciating the key word for clarity.

"Oh!" she said as if a light bulb had been lit, "RUSTIC potato chips. I see."

"Mom, no, the potato chips are not rustic or rusty; they're Utz's Dark Russet potato chips."

"The chips are dark because they're rusty?" she asked.

Now that my mother is 77, the flow of our conversations is not as streamlined as it used to be. With her hearing impaired and her brain cells preoccupied with bird-watching, joint pain and random trivia, our mother-daughter back-and-forth dialogue is often impeded by stops, restarts, wrong turns and detours.

So when I took her to our local Verizon store to update her cellphone, things did not go smoothly.

Ever since our military family bought smartphones after returning from a tour of duty in Germany back in 2011, my mother has been on our phone plan. This arrangement allows us to handle the technological details that she finds petrifying. My mother only uses her smartphone to make phone calls, send texts, read emails, take photos and play Boggle. Although she enjoys these modern conveniences, she sees her smartphone as a terrifyingly complex source of major anxiety. If her arthritic finger accidentally pokes an unfamiliar icon, whatever pops up on the screen elicits a dramatic gasp, "Oh No, what's it doing now? How do I make it go away?!" as if her smartphone was trying to attack her.

My mother does not need the latest technology (she still uses a VCR), but as we all know, smartphones are designed to fall over time. My mother's operating system had slowed to a crawl, and her internal memory was stuffed to the gills: "It's still thinking," she'd say, staring at a spinning circle on her screen. And besides, my Samsung Galaxy 7 was in need of a trade-up, too.

Tyler, a young Verizon sales agent with mild to moderate acne, took mercy on us. We perused the sleek phones on display, settling on basic Android devices that had 10 times the capability of our current phones. I tried to tame my mother's gasp reflex as Tyler led us through the purchase process.

"What email service do you use?" Tyler asked my mother while transferring her data over to her new phone. She shot me a panicked glance.

"She uses Gmail," I said on her behalf.

"What's your Gmail address?" Tyler inquired, and Mom stared blankly. I answered again. Then Tyler slid the phone across the counter to Mom. "Just type your Gmail password in."

I thought Mom might faint: "I, I, Oh no, it's in my folder back home. Oh dear." After three failed attempts, Tyler helped Mom reset her password.

Despite more stops, restarts, wrong turns and detours, we eventually got our new phones set up. When my mother gasped — "Will I get to keep all my photos? Will I still be able to use Boggle? Will it fall out of my pocket?" — I allayed her eventually distracting fear by demonstrating how a PopSocket works: "Oh, that's so clever! I think I'll get one for myself," she said, and picked one decorated with a cartoon cat wearing sunglasses.

On the way home, Mom practiced opening her lock screen: "Tap, tap, swipe. Off. Tap, tap, swipe. Off. Tap, tap, ..." she muttered to herself.

The next morning, my new phone rang. "Sweetie!" my mother said brightly. "I'm calling from my jazzy new phone, but I forgot something," she said. I thought she'd send me searching under the bed for a pair of shoes or glasses, but instead she said, "Thank you."

Since that day, we keep laughing about passwords, PopSockets and rusty potato chips.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

WORD LADDERS

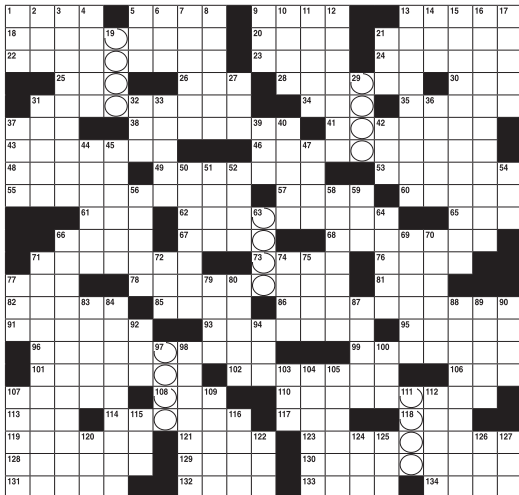
BY SAM TRABUCCO / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Sam Trabucco is an American cryptography trader based in Hong Kong. When he's not working, he enjoys playing board and card games, especially Magic: The Gathering and poker. Sam says one of his top priorities as a crossword constructor is to make his puzzles *relatable to younger solvers*. "I want this hobby to remain relevant forever!" This is his 25th puzzle for *The Times*. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Something blurred to avoid trademark infringement
 - 5 "Well, that's ridiculous!"
 - 9 One method of coffee-making
 - 13 Fully intends to
 - 18 Reason for people to hide
 - 20 Bit of ancient text
 - 21 Home of Roma
 - 22 Expert on nutrition
 - 23 Bantering remark
 - 24 Feature of Captain Ahab
 - 25 Many M.L.T. grads: Abbr.
 - 26 End of many a name on the periodic table
 - 28 Doctor's hand covering
 - 30 Tokyo, before it was Tokyo
 - 31 Not wanted
 - 34 Pop star Grande, to fans
 - 35 French movie theaters
 - 37 "Ki-i-i-i-ada"
 - 38 "You're on!"
 - 41 Black-market, say
 - 43 Occasion for male bonding, in modern lingo
 - 46 Pressing need when on the go?
 - 48 Part of a media-sales team, informally
 - 49 "Agreed"
 - 53 Philosopher who tutored Nero
 - 55 Message made with cutout letters, stereotypically
 - 57 Chowder ingredient
 - 60 Game in which each player starts with a score of 501
 - 61 West Bank grp.
 - 62 Social-media avatar, for short
 - 65 Thing given as a concession
 - 66 Castle defense
 - 67 Nobel winner
 - 68 One who has a lot to offer?
 - 71 Yellow variety of quartz
 - 73 Norse troublemaker
 - 76 Spotted
 - 77 Fenway team, familiarly
 - 78 "However hard I try
 - 81 Child-care expert
 - 82 Parts of a ziggurat
 - 85 Twin of Jacob in the Bible
 - 86 Lifetime-achievement ceremonies, e.g.
 - 91 Bequeaths
 - 93 Difference between dark and light, in a way
 - 95 Bacterium in some raw meat
 - 96 Center of a cobbler
 - 99 Clever cleanser
 - 101 Leaves alone
 - 102 Uses a modern engine
 - 106 Kenan's partner on an old sitcom
 - 107 The "L" of B.L.M.
 - 108 "Gaux Tigers!" sch.
 - 110 Love of money, per Timothly 6.10
 - 113 Brand of nail polish
 - 114 Appealing
 - 117 School closing?
 - 118 One of the former Big Three information services, along with Compuserve and Prodigy
 - 119 Words from a present giver
 - 121 Sweetheart, in Rome
 - 123 "That one's mine!"
 - 128 Word often confused with "least"
 - 129 Frenzied
 - 130 Sweet Mexican dessert
 - 131 Backslides, to Brits familiarly
 - 132 Certain sneak
 - 133 Caesar's accusation
 - 134 Like a fox
 - 135 Photo-sharing app, familiarly
 - 136 14th-century king of Aragon
 - 137 Written using an outline
 - 143 Witch
 - 145 Basketball star nicknamed "The Answer"
 - 146 Kind of test with unproven accuracy
 - 147 Largest city of Nigeria
 - 149 Word ladder, Part 1
 - 21 Big milestone for a start-up
 - 27 Slangy "I messed up"
 - 29 Word ladder, Part 2
 - 31 Old food-label std.
 - 32 Where an auto racer retires?
 - 33 Enjoyed home cooking, say
 - 36 "I Love It" duo — Pop
 - 37 Letter-shaped beam
 - 39 When repeated, king of Siam's refrain in "The King and I"
 - 40 Result of peace talks
 - 42 Some smartpats
 - 44 Oppressive ruler
 - 45 Lacking + or —, electrically
 - 47 "___ and Janis" (comic)
 - 50 Whirlybirds
 - 51 Oscar's "other"
 - 52 Gas that's lighter than air
 - 54 Nile danger
 - 56 Fire in "Jane Eyre," e.g.
 - 58 Like most ions
 - 59 Mrs., abroad

DOWN

- 1 Counterculture drug, for short
- 2 Geneva accord?
- 3 Newbie
- 4 Chose
- 5 Bit of butter
- 6 Govt. org. with the motto "Fidelity, Bravery, Integrity"
- 7 Dramatic touches
- 8 Comedian Judy
- 9 Nickname for basketball star
- 10 Jerry Erving
- 10 Is sorry about
- 63 Word ladder, Part 3
- 64 Subsidized
- 66 ★★★★★ and ★★★★★, say
- 69 Where to find some cliffhangers?
- 70 Unpopular legislation of 1773
- 71 N.F.L. referee, at the start of overtime
- 72 ___ Valley (San Francisco area)
- 74 Gem that's also a name
- 75 New Zealander
- 77 Start of some Quebec place names: Abbr.
- 79 French filmmaker
- 80 Celebrity chef Eddie
- 83 Way to go
- 84 Hot-cocoa brand
- 87 Subtlesee
- 88 "Be sharp!"
- 89 Frequent tabloid cover subject
- 90 Spot for a houseplant
- 92 Letters on a Cardinal's cap
- 94 Greenpeace or the W.W.F., for short
- 97 Word ladder, Part 4
- 98 Optimistic assertion
- 100 "___ Beso," Paul Anika hit
- 103 Prospecter's find
- 104 Start streaming, e.g.
- 105 Internet meme with grammatically incorrect captions
- 107 Shower scrubber
- 109 Eel, on a sushi menu
- 111 Word ladder, Part 5
- 112 Prospectors' finds
- 115 Mel of baseball
- 116 Understand, informally
- 120 Clarifying word on a school-reunion name tag
- 122 Tinder bio info
- 124 Amazon worker
- 125 "Kill Bill!" co-star Lucy Liu
- 126 Jazz composer
- 127 Like a fox

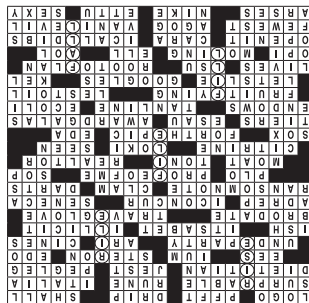


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RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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FACES

‘Woman’ power

Shania Twain reflects on the album that made her a star, changed country music

By KRISTIN M. HALL

Associated Press

The record that turned Shania Twain from a struggling singer-songwriter from Canada into a global superstar also changed country music for years to come.

Twain is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the release of “The Woman in Me” with a deluxe reissue set out Friday that includes remastered versions of the original 12 songs, remixes, live versions from her Las Vegas show and early recordings of the songs.

Twain’s self-titled debut album in 1993, which she largely didn’t have a hand in writing, failed at the charts. But her life changed after “The Woman in Me,” her Grammy-winning second album released in February 1995, which was the best-selling release by a woman in country music at the time.

“I was a poor kid and then a struggling artist all of those years until this finally happened,” said Twain in an interview with The Associated Press from her home in Switzerland, near Lake Geneva. “It was life changing for me and career changing as well.”

The determined singer overcame an early childhood marred by violence and helped raise her siblings after her parents died in 1987.

After her debut album sank, Twain met rock producer-songwriter Robert “Mutt” Lange and they married in 1993. Lange was mostly known for crafting hit albums and songs for AC/DC and Def Leppard, but he was the first to recognize that she had a distinctive voice as a songwriter that others had overlooked. Songs like “Any Man of Mine,” which became her first country No. 1 and her first crossover onto pop charts, showed off her sassy, flirty and confident side. The record centered around Twain’s point of view on songs like “(If You’re Not in It for Love) I’m Outta Here,” “The Woman in Me (Needs the Man in You)” and “Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under?”

“In my mind, I was just being

myself, and that was the great thing of all — to just be able to be myself and let my personality come through in the music,” Twain said.

Twain’s crossover success based on her own songwriting, which would be fully realized with her third and most popular album “Come On Over,” opened the way for the next generation of genre-straddling artists like Taylor Swift, Kelsea Ballerini and Maren Morris.

“I think we were all definitely influenced by Shania, even if we don’t realize it,” Carrie Underwood told The Associated Press in 2016 at a CMT Artists of the Year event in which Twain was honored. “(Her music) was so different and kind of revolutionary at the time. She definitely paved the way for a lot of us.”

“The Woman in Me” also introduced Twain as a visually creative artist who knew how to use music videos to broaden her reach since she had not yet started major touring. Her early videos featured her multifaceted sides with Twain out on the range riding horses, or baring her midriff while dancing (sometimes without a bra) or wrapped in white in front of Egyptian pyramids. But she was also taking risk as a country artist to be so forward with her sexuality and her classic supermodel looks.

Twain said that her label told her that female fans would think she was flaunting her beauty and male fans would think she was “too forward thinking for a woman.”

The album earned her the first of five Grammy Awards as well as Academy of Country Music awards for album of the year and female vocalist of the year. “The Woman in Me” is 12 times platinum, but she later broke her own sales record with her follow-up, “Come On Over,” two years later. It is 20 times platinum. “The Woman in Me” was the first of three of her albums that have been certified diamond, which means they have sold more than 10 million copies.

Despite taking a long break from recording between 2002’s “Up!” and 2017’s “Now,” Twain



CHRISTOPHER SMITH, INVISION/AP

Shania Twain is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the album that turned her into a global superstar.

is still the best-selling female country artist, according to the Recording Industry of America. But 25 years later, Twain refuses to be fenced in by genre lines.

“My intention was to always be a part of the larger world,” said Twain, who has been working

this year on writing new music for her next album, as well as curating her own Apple Music radio station. “That’s what I expected from myself as an artist: to be an international artist. Not to be limited to one specific genre.”

Teigen, Legend share grief of miscarriage

Chrissy Teigen said she and John Legend are in “deep pain” following her miscarriage, which she announced on social media early Thursday.

Teigen wrote that they were “driving home from the hospital with no baby. This is unreal.”

Revealing they had chosen the name Jack, the model and the musician wrote of their love for their lost son, who would have been their third child.

“To our Jack — I’m so sorry that the first few moments of your life were met with so many complications, that we couldn’t give you the home you needed to survive. We will always love you,” she wrote.

‘Divas for Democracy’ unites Broadway, drag

Broadway and the world of drag will combine this month for a streaming variety show to promote voter participation that promises plenty of show tunes and a lot of fierce lipstick.

“Divas For Democracy: United We Slay” will feature Broadway stars such as Chita Rivera and Stephanie J. Block singing theater songs while their drag counterparts from “RuPaul’s Drag Race” “match their vocal prowess with lip sync passion and style,” according to organizers.

The show will stream on StageIt on Oct. 18th. There’s a minimum \$5 donation and all proceeds benefit Drag Out the Vote, a national, nonpartisan voter engagement nonprofit.

Broadway director plans book on enslavement

Broadway director Schele Williams is working on a book for young people about the history of enslavement.

Abrams Children’s Books announced Wednesday that Williams’ “Your Legacy: A Bold Reclaiming of Our Enslaved History” will come out in October 2021. The publisher is calling “Your Legacy” an “uplifting introduction to African American history that celebrates and honors enslaved ancestors, their accomplishments and sacrifices, and defines how they are remembered.”

Williams said in a statement that the book, which will include illustrations by Tonya Engel, was inspired in part by her childhood education.

Last recordings of Breubeck to be released

Nearly eight years after his death, the final solo recording of late American jazz pianist legend Dave Breubeck is set for release next month.

Verve Records announced last week that “Lullabies” — a collection of intimate standards often played for children — will be available Nov. 6 in the latest effort by a label to preserve unreleased jazz recordings.

Compiled from Associated Press

Country star, Elvis songwriter Mac Davis dies at 78

The Associated Press

Country star Mac Davis, who launched his career crafting the Elvis hits “A Little Less Conversation” and “In the Ghetto,” and whose own hits include “Baby Don’t Get Hooked On Me,” has died. He was 78.

His longtime manager Jim Morey said in a press release that Davis died in Nashville on Tuesday after heart surgery and was surrounded by family and friends.

Davis had a long and varied career in music for decades as a writer, singer, actor

and TV host and was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2006. He was named 1974’s entertainer of the year by the Academy of Country Music and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Born in Lubbock, Texas, and raised in Georgia, Davis was inspired by fellow Lubbock native Buddy Holly, but it was Elvis who gave him his first musical big break. Davis worked as a staff songwriter in Los Angeles for Nancy Sinatra’s publishing company when in 1968 Presley cut the funky “A Little

Less Conversation,” which Davis had written with Aretha Franklin in mind.

Although it had a little success at the time, the song became a bigger hit after Presley’s death, being covered by more than 30 artists and topping charts everywhere from Canada to Denmark.

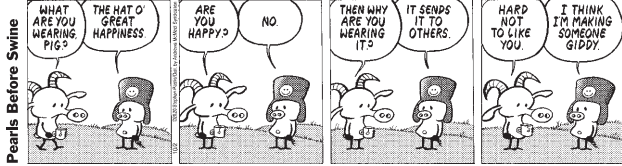
Davis’ most licensed TV soundtrack song, “A Little Less Conversation” reached No. 1 in the UK in 2002 after it was used in a Nike commercial and was featured in the hit movie “Ocean’s 11.”



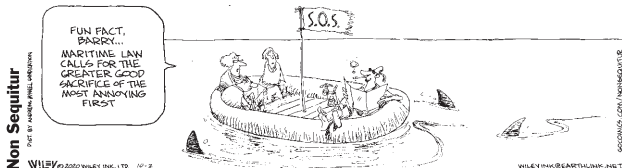
Frazz



Dilbert



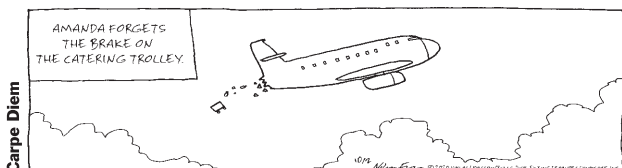
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



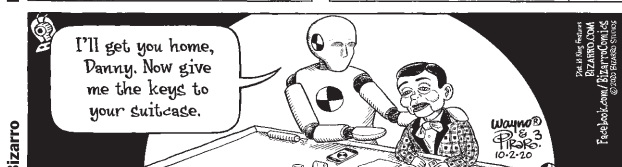
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11			
12				13						14					
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45	46	47					48	49							
50							51				52				
53							54				55				

ACROSS

- 1 "Fresh Air" ailer
- 4 Fern, counterpart
- 8 Drain blockage
- 12 Odometer start
- 13 Biblical grain measure
- 14 Angelic instrument
- 15 Newscast opener
- 17 Early birds?
- 18 Icy downpours
- 19 Resort
- 21 Nanny's charge
- 22 Police commissioner, in tabloid headlines
- 26 Book of maps
- 29 Purring pet
- 30 Med. plan
- 31 Cowboy's footwear
- 32 Crony
- 33 Tara of "Sharknado"
- 34 Olympic skater
- 35 Midori
- 35 Vat
- 36 Floats, as a scent
- 37 List of best-sellers
- 39 Writer's block?
- 40 Possesses
- 41 Delivers a keynote
- 45 Hawaiian island
- 48 Gold medal, e.g.
- 50 Diarist Frank
- 51 Author Wiesel

- 52 Historic period
- 53 Santa's runaway
- 54 Tear
- 55 Weir

- 25 Okra units
- 26 Slightly
- 27 Dorothy's dog
- 28 Roller coaster feature
- 29 Urban carrier
- 32 Groan-inducing humorist
- 33 Doppler device
- 35 Chai, e.g.
- 36 Bent out of shape
- 38 Pufferer
- 39 Visit briefly
- 42 Even
- 43 Pound of verse
- 44 Stitched line
- 45 Ruin the veneer
- 46 Year in Acapulco
- 47 Family card game
- 49 Flamenco cheer

DOWN

- 1 Forget-me- (flowers)
- 2 Motel amenity
- 3 Lariat
- 4 Guiding maxims
- 5 "It's — Unusual Day"
- 6 Sun. talk
- 7 Waterford product
- 8 Tightlisted
- 9 Trail the pack
- 10 Assoc.
- 11 Family docs
- 16 Attack
- 20 Soup cooker
- 23 Gourmet cook
- 24 Skip

Answer to Previous Puzzle

O	W	L	S	G	O	A	T	G	N	U			
R	H	E	A	O	R	C	H	E	O	S			
G	E	T	S	H	O	R	T	Y	T	A	M		
S	E	A	S	O	N			M	O	C	H	A	
			E	T		G	R	E	C	O			
T	U	G	S		F	R	O	T		M	A	N	
A	N	E		L	I	P		F	R	I			
B	O	T	S		A	P	E		R	Y	A	N	
			G	O	N	G	S		R	A			
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S	R	I		G	E	T		B	E	T	T	E	R
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10-2

CRYPTOQUIP

WK RAZV ZLSQVNQFV NQVQ

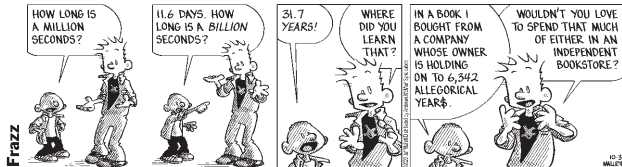
F PQVYFWL RQXXANWCG-VQS

PAXAV, NGFY PAZXS YGQR

TQ? PAVFX TVWQK.C.

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WORLD-FAMOUS POP SINGER WHO IS ALSO A HIGHLY PROFICIENT MIDDLE-DISTANCE RUNNER: MILER CYRUS.

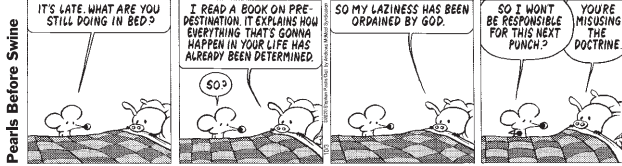
Today's Cryptquip Clue: Z equals U



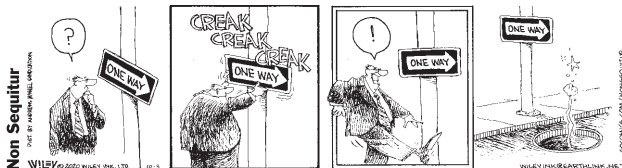
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Pearls Before Swine



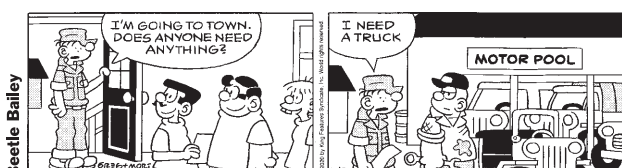
Non Sequitur



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			38			39			40		41	
42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50						51			52	53		
54									55			
56									57			

ACROSS

- 1 Taxpayer's dread
- 6 Cleansed
- 12 Refer (to)
- 13 In a big way
- 14 Sneaky sort
- 15 Focused at work
- 16 Fast time
- 17 Aspiring atty.'s exam
- 19 Actress Ruby
- 20 Barking critter
- 22 Bracketed word
- 24 Cleric's garment
- 27 Arkin of "Argo"
- 29 Intel product
- 32 Unexpected visitor
- 35 Exotic berry
- 36 Barak of Israel
- 37 Monk's title
- 38 Gerund suffix
- 40 Gaelic
- 42 Author Brown
- 44 Make over
- 46 Wound cover
- 50 Not just
- 52 Japanese mat
- 54 Decorates
- 55 Strands during the winter
- 56 Take in
- 57 Harvest goddess

DOWN

- 1 Downwind
- 2 — Bator
- 3 Does some housework
- 4 Chemical suffix
- 5 Fib
- 6 Horse's halter?
- 7 Mom's sisters
- 8 Pvt.'s superior
- 9 Restaurant bigwig
- 10 Differently
- 11 Actor Dick Van —
- 12 Piercing tool
- 18 Cut
- 21 Corn serving
- 23 Hosp. area
- 24 Simile center
- 25 Robbiter of hockey
- 26 Temporary mental fatigue
- 28 Having phobias, perhaps
- 30 Medit. nation
- 31 Sch. org
- 33 Brooch
- 34 Dept. store inventory
- 39 Big smiles
- 41 Perfume compound
- 42 Group of two
- 43 "The King —"
- 45 Formerly, once
- 47 Sherlock's assignment
- 48 Writer Kingsley
- 49 Laundry holder
- 51 "Right you —!"
- 53 Top card

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

10-3

CRYPTOQUIP

TE U HTX DZDFXDSYJ
 TSRDFFNQRO U EUOATIS OAIV,
 T TZUXTSD OIZDHIKJ VINPK
 YFJ "ORIQ RAD KFDOODO!"
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOUR UNDERWEAR WERE A CERTAIN YELLOWISH-RED COLOR, WHAT COULD THEY BE? CORAL BRIEFS.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: E equals F

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OPINION

DOD rules take religious freedom to extremes

By CHRIS RODDA
Special to Stars and Stripes

Mike Berry's Sept. 24 op-ed "Religious freedom for all troops" would more aptly be titled "Trump's DOD changes religion regs to appease far-right fundamentalist Christian base and allow all manner of shoving unwanted religion down service members' throats." Berry, of the fundamentalist Christian legal organization First Liberty Institute, crediting "our commander in chief's strong stance on religious freedom," is ecstatic over the changes, and the prospect of completely obliterating the wall of separation between church and state in our military.

The recent action of Trump appointee Matthew P. Donovan, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, in transforming DOD Instruction 1300.17, "Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services," a regulation that, as its name implies, made exceptions to the usual restrictions on religious practices, into an all new DOD Instruction 1300.17, even changing the Instruction's title to "Religious Liberty in the Military Services," makes the allowing of all manner of otherwise prohibited religious behavior the rule rather than the exception.

Donovan's far-reaching regulation changes come on the heels of demands from Berry's allies in Congress, 20 fundamentalist Christian members of the House of Representatives, who wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper attacking the Military Religious Freedom Foundation for successfully stopping a number of unconstitutional promotions of religion by military chaplains and one Air Force officer, and a similar letter to Esper from Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, for which Berry's First Liberty Institute took credit.

At the core of Donovan's changes in the revamped and renamed DOD Instruction is the greatly increased prominence of the "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" (RFRA).

In recent years, the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) has become the go-to law for fundamentalist Christian legal organizations such as Berry's First Liberty Institute in their defense of unconstitutional promotions of religion.

This law is the epitome of the right-wing Christians' view of the First Amendment's religion clauses as creating only a one-way wall — that the "Free Exercise" clause is the only religion clause that matters, and that the other direction of the wall, the "Establishment" clause, doesn't exist.

This preeminence of the "Free Exercise" clause to the exclusion of the "Estab-

lishment" clause comes through loud and clear throughout the new regulation, starting with the regulation's "Purpose" statement. The purpose as it appeared in the old version was:

"To establish policy, procedures, and responsibilities for the accommodation of religious practices in the Military Services."

In Donovan's new version, the "Purpose" statement begins:

"Establishes DoD policy in furtherance of the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

The purpose also says: "Implements requirements in Section 2000bb-1 of Title 42, United States Code (U.S.C.) also known as 'The Religious Freedom Restoration Act' (RFRA), and other laws applicable to the accommodation of religious practices for DoD to provide, in accordance with the RFRA, that DoD Components will normally accommodate practices of a Service member based on a sincerely held religious belief."

This is what the Religious Freedom Restoration Act says:

IN GENERAL. Government shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, except as provided in subsection (b).

(b) EXCEPTION

Government may substantially burden a person's exercise of religion only if it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

To fundamentalist Christians like Berry, Cruz, and the members of Congress who wrote to Esper, any limit whatsoever on a chaplain's or service member's ability to shove their religion down the throats of others is a "substantial burden" on their free exercise of religion. There is no consideration of the "substantial burden" that unfettered proselytizing and promotions of religion by service members whose "conduct motivated by a sincerely held religious belief" puts on the right of other service members to be free from unwanted proselytizing and promotions of religion.

The most deleterious changes in Donovan's new regulation are the definitions of what a "religious practice" is and what a "substantial burden" is.

Under the old regulation, an accommodation for a "religious practice" was understood to mean things such as a Sikh requesting an accommodation to wear a beard, a service member wearing an item of religious apparel or religious jewelry

with their uniform, a service member requesting time off to attend worship services of their religion. In other words, things that a reasonable person would define as a religious practice, and, very importantly, things that would not have any effect on the religious freedom of others.

In Donovan's new regulation, however, a "religious practice" has been redefined as:

"An action, behavior, or course of conduct constituting individual expressions of religious beliefs, whether or not compelled by, or central to, the religion concerned."

And the definition by which a governmental act is a substantial burden to a Service member's exercise of religion "now includes anything that:

"Prevents participation in conduct motivated by a sincerely held religious belief" or "Behavior and conduct" This could include just about anything. Is God motivating you to proselytize your fellow service members? Go ahead! That's "conduct motivated by a sincerely held religious belief." Want to pray out loud at your desk so your subordinates all hear how religious you are? No problem! That's just behavior "constituting individual expressions" of your religious beliefs!

And, according to Donovan's new regulation, the burden of proof is now on your commander to show why your conduct or behavior shouldn't be allowed, and of course your commander can't turn to DOD Instruction 1300.17 because Donovan's new fundamentalist-friendly version of this regulation is what's allowing your hitherto prohibited conduct or behavior.

An outraged Mikey Weinstein, founder and president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, has a few words for Under Secretary Donovan and his new regulation:

"These miserably wretched, instantaneous DOD Instruction 1300.17 mauling actions by Trump's DoD cannot be allowed to tar and feather the Constitution's clear and incontrovertible, foundational prohibitions of allowing the State to 'establish' religion!"

"MRFF will fight tooth and nail, and day and night to stop this new, twisted and perverted version of DOD Instruction 1300.17. Indeed, MRFF will never allow this brand new regulatory provision to illicitly buttress the already repugnant and reprehensible efforts of the fundamentalist Christian religious right from perpetuating its pervasive and pernicious pattern and practice of forcing its weaponized version of the Gospel of Jesus Christ upon otherwise defenseless military subordinates."

Chris Rodda is senior research director for the Military Religious Freedom Foundation.

As West watches, Xi is doubling down on genocide

A Washington Post editorial

For the past three years, China's Communist regime has waged a campaign of cultural genocide in the sprawling western region of Xinjiang. It has confined more than 1 million ethnic Uighurs and Kazakhs to detention centers and sought to eradicate their allegiance to Islam. Detainees have been forced to eat pork and memorize Chinese songs; women have been sterilized, and children separated from their parents and sent to boarding schools. China's vast system of electronic surveillance has been established to monitor the rest of the population, using technologies such as facial recognition.

Slowly, the United States and other Western governments have begun to react to this extraordinary crime. Though President Donald Trump reportedly signed off

twice on the repression in meetings with Chinese leaders, Jinping, the Trump administration has imposed sanctions on officials responsible for carrying out the crackdown and imposed some restrictions on imports from the region. Last week, the House passed a bill that would bar imports from Xinjiang that were not proved to be untainted by forced labor.

Xi, however, is unfazed. At a conference of Xinjiang and party officials last weekend, he declared that "practice has proven that the party's strategy for governing Xinjiang in the new era is completely correct." He ordered more measures to "make a shared awareness of Chinese nationhood take root deep in the soul" of the Uighurs and other Muslim minorities. Xi is doubling down on genocide.

Two new studies released last week showed his words were more than bluster.

The Xinjiang Data Project of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute found that the regime is building scores of new prison-like compounds where Uighurs are held. Satellite imagery showed 380 suspected detention sites created or expanded since 2017, including 61 since July 2019.

A second report by the Xinjiang Data Project, also based on satellite imagery, found that some 8,500 mosques in the region had been destroyed since 2017, and another 7,500 had been damaged.

What's needed is a concerted and unified response by Western democracies that imposes much higher costs on Beijing. That's not likely to happen unless security, who according to former national security adviser John Bolton believed that Xi's attack on the Uighurs was "exactly the right thing to do," is voted out in November.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editors are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

There's no debate that Trump sullen a forum for voters

San Francisco Chronicle
Americans should be saddened, if not angered, by the distressingly uninged debate between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden on Tuesday night.

Some of the blame could go to Chris Wallace, the moderator from Fox News, for flitting to make the debate a debate determined by Trump's constant interruptions and wanton disregard for the time limit. To be sure, Biden occasionally stepped on Trump's lines, though he generally refrained from taking Trump's bait.

But most of the blame must be assessed on the shoulders of the United States, since we are out of control from the start. At one point early on, Biden seemed to be speaking for millions of Americans when he asked the perpetual interrupter Trump, "Will you shut up, man?"

Presidential debates have been a great example of American democracy since 1976, when Jimmy Carter and President Gerald Ford squared off. Some of those debates have been pivotal, some have been less than entertaining, but each has been carried off with a level of substance and decorum that voters want and deserve from their candidates of the free world.

Until Tuesday night.

There were almost too many lowlights to count, most courtesy of Donald Trump. It was as if Trump were given one last chance to show that he had grown into the job of the presidency, that the gravity of his duties and acceptance of the need to serve the American people would humble him. He clearly has not. No doubt his supporters may have loved his bully mode, but if there is such a thing as "Trump fatigue" — and if there wasn't before Tuesday, there is now — it's hard to imagine his debate performance will gain him any votes.

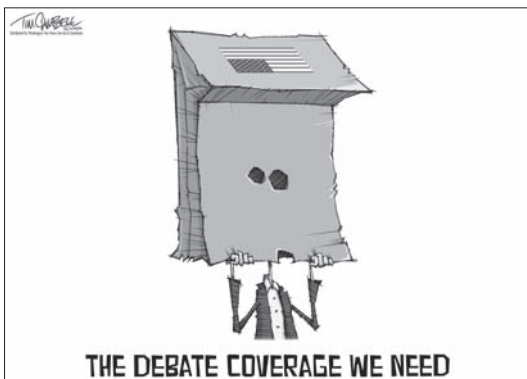
Even so, Trump did not do the prevailing concerns about him. He refused to answer a direct question about whether he would condemn white supremacists. Instead, he riffed about the greater problem with radicals on the left and — most disturbingly of all — suggested the white supremacists and Proud Boys should "stand back" and "stand by."

Stand by?
Even worse than failing to denounce this hate group, Trump just gave them a rallying cry. Get nervous, Americans.

On the final question, Trump once again showed a side of not wanting to admit to a peaceful transition of power if it were to lose. He repeated unfounded allegations about voting by mail, which is being expanded in multiple states in response to a pandemic that makes in-person voting a health hazard. "This is going to be a fraud like you've never seen," Trump said. Biden was clear in his response: Once a winner is declared, "that will be the end of it."

Trump's income taxes history illustrates an inequity trend

The New York Times
Donald Trump lived lavishly while paying little in federal income taxes. The Times reported on Sunday that Trump paid no taxes in 10 of the 15 years immediately preceding his run for the White House. In each of the following two years, 2016 and 2017, he paid 10 percent, or \$7.50 million.
Remove Trump's current job from the



picture, and what remains is a story that still demands attention. The portrait of a man who earned hundreds of millions of dollars, lived a life of comic excess and yet, in many years, paid nothing in federal income taxes is an indictment of the federal income tax system. It illustrates the profound inequities of the tax code and the symbolic state of enforcement.

The government has sharply reduced the share of income that it collects in taxes from the wealthiest Americans. One recent study found that the 400 wealthiest households paid 70% of their total income in federal, state and local taxes in 1950, 47% in 1980 and 23% in 2018. The cuts in tax rates have come mostly at the federal level.

The government allows income to be sheltered from taxation for hundreds of different reasons. The tax code itself has long enjoyed a particularly sweet set of loopholes. A homeowner can write off the interest payments on a mortgage loan, but the owners of commercial buildings get a host of other benefits, too. It's relatively easy for real estate investors to use past losses to offset income, to defer income and to avoid reporting some kinds of income. Best of all, the law lets investors claim a building is depreciating in value even as the actual value increases.

"I love depreciation," Trump said during the 2016 campaign.

Moreover, the formidable complexity of the tax code makes it difficult to tell when wealthy taxpayers have crossed legal lines. For the rich, taxation often becomes a kind of structured negotiation between the taxpayer's experts and the government's experts. It's not a fair fight: The rich keep getting richer, while the IRS keeps getting smaller. Republicans in Congress have slashed funding for the IRS, stripping the agency of expertise, resources and authority. The number of IRS auditors has fallen by one-third since 2010. The government employs fewer people to chase deadbeats than at any time since the 1950s.

The share of all tax returns subject to an audit declined by 46% from 2010 to 2018, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Astonishingly, the decline was even steeper for millionaires — the audit rate fell 61% over the same period.

As ProPublica has reported, the government now audits lower-income households that claim the earned-income tax credit at roughly the same frequency as high-income households. It's easier for the depleted agency to pick on people who can't afford to hire expensive tax attorneys.

The result? On current trends, the federal government will fail to collect \$7.5 trillion in taxes over the next decade — about 15% of the total amount owed.

Cracking down on rich tax cheats is law enforcement. It is a basic function of government to ensure that people are playing by the rules. Tax cheating is not a victim-

less crime. Every dollar hidden from the government is that much less money to spend on education, roads and research. The rich are benefiting at the expense of everyone else.

It would be relatively easy to start collecting some of that money. The Congressional Budget Office estimated in July that adding \$40 billion to the IRS budget over the next decade would yield \$103 billion in otherwise uncollected income taxes.

The methodology of that estimate is extremely conservative, as Natasha Sarin, an assistant law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Lawrence Summers, an economics professor at Harvard, noted in a July paper. Sarin and Summers estimated that fully restoring IRS funding, and modernizing collection techniques, would allow the government to collect \$1 trillion of the unpaid taxes.

Strict enforcement should start with the president, to show that no American is above the law. Trump claimed a tax refund of \$72.9 million in 2010, according to the Times report; the government paid the claim, and then opened an investigation. If Trump loses, he could owe the government more than \$100 million in repayment, interest and penalties. It should not take federal authorities more than a decade to determine whether Trump has paid the full amount he owes. The government must move urgently to resolve this question.

Paying taxes is a civic duty, and the government needs the money. Most Americans try to pay what they owe, even if they wish they owed less, and they take comfort in the assumption that most of their neighbors are conducting themselves in the same way. Americans deserve to know that the president has paid his taxes, too.

Qualified candidate is the only label that truly fits Barrett

The Wall Street Journal
President Donald Trump's nomination of Amy Coney Barrett for the Supreme Court is a highlight of his presidency and perhaps a hinge moment for the judiciary. Barrett's record and intellect suggest she can join Trump's other appointees in reviving core constitutional principles in American law and life.

If this sounds like a tall order for one justice, we do not mean to suggest this is her job alone. She is the latest example of a new generation of originalist judges whom Trump and the GOP Senate have elevated to the federal bench. The numbers — three justices and 53 appellate-court judges — are crucial, but more important is how they approach the law. With rare exceptions, they think of themselves as protectors of the proper constitutional order, not as a third policy-making alternative to the political branches.
Though she has only served three years

on the federal bench, Barrett certainly seems an exemplar of this model. At the White House on Saturday, Barrett said the legal principles are those of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, for whom she clerked. This could be dismissed as a rote genuflection to the revered Scalia, but her opinions and scholarship suggest she means it.

Democrats may portray her as a blank check for executive power, but they misjudge her principles. She has ruled against the Trump administration on immigration law, notably in *Morales v. Barr*, a deportation case.

At a Hillsdale College event in 2019, she noted that "(Justice) Robert Jackson owed his career to (President Franklin D.) Roosevelt... Yet Jackson did not allow whatever personal loyalty or affection that he had for Roosevelt influence his decision in (*Korematsu*, the Japanese-American internment case in World War II). Unfortunately, he was in the minority. His was a dissent. The Court decided 6-3 that the exclusion order was constitutional."

The political left is also portraying Barrett as a "radical" who will easily dismiss precedent, especially on abortion. This is what they say about every conservative, and it's not true. She has ruled in line with precedent on the Seventh Circuit, notably on abortion in *Price v. Chicago* (2019). One dissent she joined in an Indiana abortion case was vindicated at the Supreme Court. Our guess is that on overturning precedent she will fall in the court's middle — more willing than Chief Justice John Roberts but less than Justices Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch.

A note about abortion is in order here that will dispense the left and right. Both sides claim for political reasons that they anticipate a *rope* of *Roe v. Wade*, but they are likely to be disappointed. Anti-abortion conservatives once supported Anthony Kennedy for the high court because like Barrett he is Catholic, only to be disappointed in Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992).

Roe was transcended by Casey, which further embedded abortion rights in precedent. You can believe, as even Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, that *Roe* was based on faulty logic and still believe the right to abortion is too settled in law to overturn now. The real legal battleground will be over the limits of state regulation such as late-term abortion and health restrictions.

It's no accident that Thomas is the only current justice who has called for overturning *Roe*. Demanding that a nominee declare herself on *Roe* is a destructive exercise, and Barrett shouldn't answer.

Every new justice changes the dynamics on the high court, and in ways that are hard to predict. One helpful change with a sixth center-right justice is that Roberts would need to persuade at least one other conservative if he wants to form a majority with the three more moderate justices.

Democrats view all this with horror, but we think they would be wiser to view it as an opportunity. One reason court nominations have become so bitter is because progressives have long viewed the judiciary as a second legislature for policies they can't pass through the more resistant Congress and climate regulation (*Massachusetts v. EPA*, 2007). If that avenue is foreclosed, as we hope it will be, then the left may have to achieve what they want the old-fashioned way — democratic persuasion and consent.

This is also a lesson for Republicans, who shouldn't default to the courts simply because there are more conservatives on the bench. In the best case, a more modest Supreme Court that sticks to the law and its constitutional calling may even cause Congress to return to doing its job of forging durable consensus on public policy.

All of this is hope for the judicial future. For now, and no matter the election consequences, Republican senators should do their elected duty and confirm an excellent nominee. Win or lose in November, they should also sign the legislation restoring proper constitutional government.

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AL WILD-CARD PLAYOFFS



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

The Tampa Bay Rays' Hunter Renfroe flips his bat after hitting a grand slam off Toronto Blue Jays starting pitcher Hyun-Jin Ryu during the Rays' 8-2 win to clinch their American League wild-card series.

Rays rout Jays, take series

Renfroe grand slam helps Tampa Bay sweep Toronto in AL wild card

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Rays gathered in front of their dugout and posed for a celebratory team picture they're hoping will not be the last they take this postseason.

Hunter Renfroe hit a grand slam and the top-seeded Rays won a postseason series for the first time in 12 years, overpowering the young Toronto Blue Jays 8-2 Wednesday to finish a two-game sweep of their wild-card matchup.

Tampa Bay advanced to play the rival New York Yankees in a best-of-five AL Division Series beginning Monday in San Diego.

With a roster featuring just a handful of players who have posted impressive résumés so far, the

AL East champions believe they're nowhere near finished.

"We've been confident since Day One. So if we put our heads down and just do what we've been doing and prepare like we've been preparing, the sky's the limit," winning pitcher Tyler Glasnow said.

Said manager Kevin Cash: "We have very good players first and foremost."

"I understand the back-of-the-baseball card stuff and some of our guys are not as established," he said. "What we do have, what makes it formidable is that the entire roster is used to help us win games. We do that consistently during the season and are definitely going to do it in the postseason."

Renfroe launched the first

playoff grand slam in franchise history during a six-run second inning. Glasnow kept the Rays ahead from there, allowing two runs — on a pair of homers by Danny Jansen — in six innings.

Mike Zunino hit a two-run homer off Blue Jays ace Hyun Jin Ryu during Tampa Bay's big inning. Manuel Margot and Randy Arozarena also drove in runs.

The next round will be played at Petco Park in San Diego. Renfroe is plenty familiar with the stadium — he hit 85 home runs in the previous three years for the Padres before being traded to the Rays last December.

Glasnow walked one and struck out eight before a small gathering of family and friends who were allowed to attend the series at Tropicana Field.

Roundup

Yankees finish off Indians in five-hour game

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — It took the New York Yankees nearly five hours on the field, carried them from Wednesday to Thursday and September into October to complete the sweep.

They stumbled into the 2020 postseason. They're standing tall now.

DJ LeMahieu's tiebreaking single in the ninth inning off closer Brad Hand sent the Yankees into the AL Division Series — and a matchup with rival Tampa Bay — after a wild 10-9 win over the Cleveland Indians early Thursday in the longest nine-inning game in major league history.

"I'm 47 years old. I've watched a lot of baseball. I've watched a lot of my dad's playoff games, been in some really big games, and I don't know how you top that one — the back and forth, the amount of

big plays," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "Tonight just had that feeling that these guys weren't going to be denied.

"They weren't going to lose."

At 4 hours, 50 minutes — even without two rain delays totaling another 76 minutes — it was draining. It's no wonder after Arodis Chapman got the final out well after 1 a.m. that the Yankees barely celebrated on the field. They observed COVID protocols and shared some fist bumps as they left.

"You don't have to pour champagne on each other to appreciate what an epic game that was and the fact that we're moving on," Boone said.

The Yankees will play the Rays in a best-of-five Division Series next week in San Diego.

Astros 3, Twins 1: Carlos Correa hit a two-out, tiebreaking home run in the seventh inning for Houston, which produced

another stifling pitching performance and a sweep, sending the Yankees to a record 18th straight postseason loss.

Nine months after the Astros' rules-breaking, sign-stealing system was revealed, they advanced to the Division Series in Los Angeles. As the sixth seed, they'll face the Oakland Athletics or Chicago White Sox in a best-of-five matchup starting Monday at Dodger Stadium.

Kyle Tucker hit two RBI singles for Houston and made a key throw from left field for the inning-ending out in the fifth.

Athletics 5, White Sox 3: Marcus Semien and Chris Davis homered early and host Oakland held off Jose Abreu and Chicago, sending their AL playoff series to a deciding Game 3.

A's reliever Jake Diekmann walked home a run in the ninth, then retired the big hitting Abreu on a sharp grounder to end

Scoreboard

Playoffs		IP		H	R	ER	BB	SO
WILD CARD SERIES								
(Best-of-three, x if necessary)								
American League								
Tampa Bay 2, Toronto 0								
Wednesday: Tampa Bay 8, Toronto 2								
Thursday: Chicago White Sox 4, Oakland 1								
Wednesday: Oakland 5, Chicago White Sox 3								
Thursday: Game 3: Chicago White Sox 10, Houston 2, Minnesota 0								
Tuesday: Houston 3, Minnesota 1								
New York Yankees 2, Cleveland 0								
Tuesday: N.Y. Yankees 12, Cleveland 3								
Wednesday: N.Y. Yankees 10, Cleveland 9								

8, Rays 2		Toronto		Tampa Bay	
Biggio 3b	4 0 0	Broussar lb	3 1 2	0	0
Choi ph	3 0 0	Choi ph	2 0 0	0	0
Griehl Jr. lf	4 0 0	Arzana dh	4 2 3	1	0
Grisso Jr. dh	0 0 0	Blowhard 2b	0 0 0	0	0
Grichuk cf	4 0 1	Diaz 2b	2 1 0	0	0
Hirandez rf	4 0 1	Wild pr	3b	0 0 0	0
Shaw lb	4 0 1	Harstoft lf	4 1 1	1	0
Pank 2b	4 0 0	Renfroe rf	4 1 4	4	1
Jansen c	3 2 2	Adames ss	4 0 1	0	0
		Krmaier cf	4 1 1	0	0
		Zunino c	4 1 2	0	0

Wednesday		New York		Cleveland	
LeMhu 2b	5 0 1	Lindor ss	4 1 1	0	0
Judge rf	4 0 0	Hrndez 2b	4 2 2	1	0
Hicks cf	5 2 1	Ramirez 3b	4 1 3	0	0
Voll lb	2 1 0	Santana 1b	4 1 0	0	0
Wade pr	2b	0 0 0	Reyes dh	2 0 0	0
Frazier ph	1 0 0	Naylor lf	3 1 1	2	0
Ford lb	3 0 0	Lipow ph	2 0 1	2	0
Stanton dh	2 1 2	Perce c	3 0 1	1	0
Thom pr	dh	1 0 0	Leon c	2 0 0	0
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Torres ss	4 0 0	Naguin rf	4 0 0	0	0
Gardner lf	3 1 0	Hedges ph	1 0 0	0	0
Sanchez c	4 1 3	DeShields cf	3 1 1	0	0
Totals	34 10 8 10	Totals	38 9 9 9	0	0

Tampa Bay		Toronto	
Ryu lf	1-1	1 1/2	8 7 3 1 3
Stripling	1 1/3	3 1/3	1 1 0 0 0
Pearson	2 0 0 0 0 0 5		
Bass	1 0 0 0 0 2 1		
Hatch	1 0 0 0 0 0 1		
Dolis	1 1 0 0 0 0 1		
Tampa Bay		6	6 2 2 1 8
Glasnow	4 1 0	1/3	1 0 0 0 1
Loup	3/4	1 0 0 0 0 1	
Thompson	1 0 0 0 0 0 1		
N Anderson	1 0 0 0 0 0 1		

Totals		34 2 7 2		Totals		38 9 9 9	
				001		002-2	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
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				000		000-5	

Athletics 5, White Sox 3		Chicago		Oakland	
Anderson ss	5 1 3	0	0	Semien ss	4 1 0
Mercer 2b	4 0 0	0	0	La Stella 2b	4 1 0
Grandt c	2 0 3	0	0	Ortiz dh	0 0 0
Sanchez pr	0 0 0	0	0	Lleone cf	4 1 2
Abreu lf	5 0 0	0	0	Canha lf	4 1 0
Green dh	2 0 0	0	0	Green dh	2 0 0
Mzarp pr	dh	2 0 1	0	Lamb ph	3b
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Engel rf	4 0 1	0	0	Davis dh	3 1 1
Garcia lf	2 0 0	0	0	Piscotty rf	3 1 0
Collins ph	1 1 0	0	0	Murphy c	3 0 0
Dyson lf	1 0 0	0	0		
Wendert 2b	4 1 0	0	0		
Totals	37 3 10 3	Totals	31 5 7 3	0	0

Totals		37 3 10 3		Totals		31 5 7 3	
				000		022-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	

Chicago		Houston		
Springer cf	r4	4 0 0	Arreez 2b	3 0 0
Altuve 2b	4 0 0	Keifer cf	3 0 0	
Crutcher 3b	2 0 0	Crutcher 3b	3 0 1	
Bregman 1b	3 0 0	Bxtn pr	dh	
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0	
Gurriel lb	4 0 0	Cave lf	1 0 0	
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0	
Reddick rf	4 0 0	Kinifirov lf	4 0 1	
Stewart cf	3 0 0	Polanco ss	3 0 0	
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0	
Totals	32 3 5 3	Totals	30 0 0 0	

Houston		Minnesota	
Arzana dh	4 0 0	Arreez 2b	3 0 0
Crutcher 3b	2 0 0	Keifer cf	3 0 0
Bregman 1b	3 0 0	Crutcher 3b	3 0 1
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Gurriel lb	4 0 0	Cave lf	1 0 0
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Reddick rf	4 0 0	Kinifirov lf	4 0 1
Stewart cf	3 0 0	Polanco ss	3 0 0
11	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Totals	32 3 5 3	Totals	30 0 0 0

Totals		32 3 5 3		Totals		30 0 0 0	
				000		101-3	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	
				000		000-11	

Chicago		Houston	
Keuchel L0-1	3 1/2	6	5 3 0 4
Cordero	2 1/2	1	0 0 0 2
Goose	1 1/2	0	0 0 0 0
Heuer	1	0	0 0 0 0
Hankins	7	6	1 1 1 5
Sassit	1 1/2	4	2 2 1 5
Dierker L0-1	1 1/2	0	0 0 0 0
Bassitt	1	0	0 0 0 1

Totals		37 3 10 3		Totals		31 5 7 3	
				000		022-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	
				000		000-5	

Chicago		Houston	
Keuchel L0-1	3 1/2	6	5 3 0 4
Cordero	2 1/2	1	0 0 0 2
Goose	1 1/2	0	0 0 0 0
Heuer	1	0	0 0 0 0
Hankins	7	6	1 1 1 5
Sassit	1 1/2	4	2 2 1 5
Dierker L0-1	1 1/2	0	0 0 0 0
Bassitt	1	0	0 0 0 1

matchup at 1-11.
Game 3 was Thursday at the Coliseum.
The White Sox went 14-0 in the regular season against left-handed starters and beat southpaw Jesus Luzardo in the opener. Oakland manager Bob Melvin acknowledged it might make him reconsider who to start with the season on the line — perhaps righty Mike Fiers over lefty Sean Manaea.

Chris Bassitt allowed one run on six hits in seven-plus innings during an impressive postseason debut as the AL West champion A's snapped a six-game postseason losing streak dating to 2013.

The right-hander, drafted by the White Sox before being traded to Oakland in December 2014, came in on a nice roll having won his last three regular-season decisions.

MLB PLAYOFFS/FRENCH OPEN

Madness: Action-packed day unlikely to occur again

FROM BACK PAGE

night pitted the Los Angeles Dodgers, who had the game's best record in the regular season, against the sub-.500 Brewers. It was the type of matchup that invites criticism for this expanded playoff format, and there's no telling when or if the sport will have a day like Wednesday again.

For one day, however, it was quite a novelty, and the Reds were ready when they came to the plate against Atlanta. They swung at the game's first three pitches, hitting two singles to put men on first and third with nobody out.

Then the Braves escaped the jam with no scoring, a sign of things to come.

It took a while for anyone anywhere to score. When the first run came, it was in Houston's game at Minnesota, which started about an hour after the Braves and Reds. Kyle Tucker drove in a run for the Astros with a fourth-inning single.

That was around the time the Miami Marlins and Chicago Cubs were getting started. In a season when ballparks have been off limits to fans, this at least was a feast of baseball on television.

"It's cool I've been in my office a lot, kind of getting ready, with the games on, flipping back and forth and seeing what's going on in the league," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said prior to his team's night game at Cleveland. "One of the things of this expanded playoffs this year, I'm sure the real baseball fans are a little bit of heaven today, getting to see all these games."

Atlanta and Cincinnati remained scoreless into extra innings, which meant at one point, five games were in progress simultaneously. In addition to Braves-Reds, Astros-Twins and Cubs-Marlins, the Chicago White Sox were playing at Oakland, and Tampa Bay was hosting Toronto.

The first game to end was Houston's 3-1 victory over the Twins — Minnesota's 18th consecutive

postseason loss. The Braves finally beat the Reds a little while later, when Freeman singled in the 13th inning to bring home the game's only run.

That was the first postseason game to be scoreless after 11 innings, and Cincinnati's Trevor Bauer became the first pitcher in postseason history to strike out 12 batters while allowing no runs, no walks and two or fewer hits.

The next game to end was Miami's 5-1 victory. The Marlins have never lost a postseason series. They memorably won the final two games of the 2003 NL Championship Series at Wrigley Field and they began this best-of-three matchup with the Cubs in similar fashion.

The White Sox are also facing elimination after Oakland's 5-3 victory forced Game 3 of that series. It will be another winner-take-all game for the Athletics, who since 2000 have gone 0-6 in Game 5 of the Division Series and 0-3 in wild-card games.

The Blue Jays would have liked to play a winner-take-all game, but the Rays denied them the chance. Hunter Renfroe hit a grand slam, powering Tampa Bay to an 8-2 victory that ended that series.

San Diego's first postseason appearance since 2006 is off to a rough start. The Padres left injured pitching standouts Mike Clevinger and Dinesen Lamet off the roster. Then they gave up four runs in the first inning of a 7-4 loss to the St. Louis Cardinals.

The night games brought their own type of drama. The Yankees and Indians played the longest nine-inning game in baseball history — 4 hours, 50 minutes, not counting another 76 minutes in rain delays. New York scored twice in the top of the ninth to win 10-9.

Not long after that, Kenley Jansen struck out Christian Yelich to close out a 4-2 win for the Dodgers — and bring this historic day of baseball to a close.

Sofia Kenin of the U.S. plays a shot Thursday against Romania's Ana Bogdan during the second round of the French Open in Paris.

ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/AP



Kenin take a while to win; Djokovic has an easy time

By JEROME PUGMIRE
Associated Press

PARIS — Once Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin got going, she kept going — right into the third round of the French Open.

The fourth-seeded American started slowly Thursday under a closed roof on Court Philippe Chatrier before pulling out a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over Ana Bogdan.

"I knew I had to fight. She was playing well," Kenin said. "First set just didn't go my way. I couldn't find my rhythm. I knew I needed to somehow change my game or else I'm going to be out. Did not want that, definitely."

She also nearly stumbled at the end, too.

Kenin held three match points with Bogdan serving at 5-1 but failed to convert them all. In the next game, Kenin had to save three break points before finally winning on her fourth match point.

It was far easier for top-ranked Novak Djokovic when he followed Kenin on Chatrier. With the roof open and sunshine bathing the tournament's biggest stadium after days of miserable weather, Djokovic routed Ricardas Beranek 6-1, 6-2, 6-2.

Roberto Carballes Baena advanced by beating ninth-seeded Denis Shapovalov 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 3-6, 8-6 in a match lasting five hours.

Carballes Baena will next play 18th-seeded Grigor Dimitrov, who has never reached the fourth round at Roland Garros.

Earlier, former champion Jelena Ostapenko advanced to the third round when she beat second-seeded Karolina Pliskova 6-4, 6-2.

French Open scores

Thursdays

At Stade Roland Garros

Paris

Purse: **718,209,040**

Surface: Red clay

Men's Singles

Second Round

Thiago Monteiro, Brazil, def. Marcos Giron, United States, 7-6 (5), 6-4, 6-1.

Martin Fucovic, Hungary, def. Albert Ramos-Vinolas, Spain, 7-6 (2), 6-3, 7-5.

Cristian Garin (20), Chile, def. Marc Polmans, Australia, 6-7 (3), 6-2, 7-6 (3), 6-4.

Karen Khachanov (15), Russia, def. Jiri Vesely, Czech Republic, 6-1, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (7), 7-6 (2).

Grigor Dimitrov (18), Bulgaria, def. Andrej Martin, Slovakia, 6-4, 7-6 (5), 6-1.

Daniel Altmaier, Germany, def. Jann-Lennard Struff (30), Germany, 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Pablo Carreno Busta (17), Spain, def. Pablo Cuevas, Uruguay, 6-1, 6-4, 6-2.

Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Ricardas Beranek, Lithuania, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2.

Roberto Carballes Baena, Spain, def. Denis Shapovalov (9), Canada, 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 3-6, 8-6.

Daniel Elahi Galan, Colombia, def. Tennyson Sandgren, United States, 6-2, 6-2, 6-3.

Stefanos Tsitsipas (5), Greece, def. Pablo Cuevas, Uruguay, 6-1, 6-4, 6-2.

Aljaz Bedene, Slovenia, def. Nikola Milojevic, Serbia, 7-5, 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (4).

Women's Singles

Second Round

Jelena Ostapenko, Latvia, def. Karolina Pliskova (2), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2.

Danielle Collins, United States, def. Clara Tauson, Denmark, 6-2, 6-3.

Petra Kovtich, 7, Czech Republic, def. Jasmine Paolini, Italy, 6-3, 6-3.

Aryna Sabalenka (8), Belarus, def. Daria Kasatkina, Russia, 7-6 (5), 6-0.

Sofia Kenin (4), United States, def. Ana Bogdan, Romania, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Leylah Annie Fernandez, Canada, def. Polona Hercog, Slovenia, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1.

Paula Badosa, Spain, def. Sloane Stephens (29), United States, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Patricia Maria Tig, Romania, def. Christina McHale, United States, 6-4, 6-3.

Irina Seara, Romania, def. Nao Hibino, Japan, 7-6 (4), 6-4.

Clara Burel, France, def. Kaja Juvan, Slovenia, 7-6 (5), 6-2.

Irina Seara, Romania, def. Alison van Uytendaele, Belgium, 6-1, 4-0, ret.

Laura Siegemund, Germany, def. Julia Georges, Germany, 1-6 (1), 6-3.

Zhang Shuai, China, def. Alice Cornet, France, 6-4, 7-6 (3).

Garbine Mugaruru (11), Spain, def. Kristyna Pliskova, Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-2.

Men's Doubles

First Round

Michael Venus, New Zealand, and John Peers (11), Australia, def. Casper Ruud, Norway, and Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Horia Tecau, Romania, and Jean-Julien Rojer (12), Netherlands, def. Cristian Garin, Chile, and Pedro Martinez, Spain, 6-1, ret.

Second Round

Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies (8), Germany, def. Grigor Schwartzman and Federico Coria, Argentina, 6-2, 6-0.

Benjamin Bonzi and Antoine Hoang, France, def. Adrian Panarino and Benoit Paire, France, 6-3, 6-1.

Women's Doubles

First Round

Shuko Aoyama and Ai Shihabara (7), Japan, def. Renata Voracova, Czech Republic, and Bernarda Pera, United States, 6-0, 6-1.

Wujiu Kato, Japan, and Tamara Zidanec, Slovenia, def. Chloe Paquet and Tessa Andriananjainirina, France, 6-3, 6-3.

Barbora Strycova, Czech Republic, and Hsieh Su-wei (1), Taiwan, def. Maria Sanchez, United States, and Astra Sharma, Australia, 6-1, 6-4.

Kirsten Flipkens, Belgium, and Anastasiya Pavlyuchenkova, Russia, def. Kateryna Bondarenko, Ukraine, and Sharon Fichman, Canada, 6-4, 6-1.

Jennifer Brady and Caroline Dolehide, United States, def. Katarina Srebotnik, Slovenia, and Arma-Lena Friedsam, Germany, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2.

Hayley Carter, United States, and Luisa Stefani (10), Brazil, def. Ulrikke Eikeri, Norway, and Aliona Bolsova Zadorova, Spain, 7-5, 6-1, 6-3.

Kaitlyn Christian, United States, and Giuliana Olmos, Mexico, def. Anna-Karina Schmiedova, Slovakia, and Katarina Zavatska, Ukraine, 6-3, 6-2.

Nicole Pietrangeli, United States, and Iga Swiatek, Poland, def. Danka Kovinic, Montenegro, and Xenia Knoll, Switzerland, 6-1, 6-3.

Oksana Kalashnikova, Georgia, and Ekaterina Alexandrova, Russia, def. Elxane Lechemia and Elsa Jacquemont, France, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Aliaaksandra Sasthovich, Belarus, and Marta Kostyuk, Ukraine, def. Andrea Klepac, Slovenia, and Lucie Hradecka (11), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-1.

Ekaterina Makarova and Coco Gauff (16), United States, def. Aubane Droguet and Serena Jancic, France, 6-0, 6-0.

Desirae Krawczyk (14), United States, def. Storm Sanders and Ellen Perez, Australia, 6-3, 6-4.

Michaela Mertens, Belgium, and Aryna Sabalenka (3), Belarus, def. Raluca-Ioana Blanu and Irina-Camelia Begu, Romania, 6-1, 6-4.

Shelby Rogers, United States, and Corinna Dentoni, Sweden, def. Andrea Petkovic, Germany, and Yania Wickmayer, Belgium, 6-3, 6-1.



JIM MONTE/AP

The Astros' Carlos Correa, left, and George Springer celebrate after defeating the Minnesota Twins 3-1 in Game 2 to clinch their American League wild-card series Wednesday in Minneapolis.

NHL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Offseason frenzy
a ready underway

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Even before the Tampa Bay Lightning returned home to celebrate their Stanley Cup championship, Julien BriseBois was on the phone with other NHL general managers about what to do next.

He is certainly not alone in making calls.

"Although we ended the hockey season officially for the 19-20 season (Monday) night, I can tell you we're pretty busy here in Smashville getting ready for the draft, free agency and hopefully for a full season next year," Nashville GM David Poile said.

There is no rest for weary runner-up Dallas, the Lightning or the 29 other teams because the NHL offseason is already underway and will proceed at a furious pace. There have already been a handful of trades, two prominent buyouts, the two-day draft starts next Tuesday and free agency opens Oct. 9, little more than a week away.

"There's going to be some quick moves here and some teams trying to take care of business right away," Philadelphia GM Chuck Fletcher said. "There might be other teams and players that might have to be a little more patient for the right fit. Oct. 9, 10, 11, there might be quite a lot of free-agent activity and then you might have a lull there for two months."

Pittsburgh has already traded two-time Cup-winning winger Patric Hornqvist to Florida for defenseman Mike Matheson. Minnesota swapped forwards with Buffalo, sending Eric Staal there for Marcus Johansson. The New York Rangers traded Eric's brother, Marc, and a draft pick to Detroit to shed salary.

The Rangers, who are expected to use the top pick in the draft on Alexis Lafreniere, continued their youth movement Wednesday by buying out franchise goal-ender Henrik Lundqvist after the Ottawa Senators did the same last week with Masterton Trophy winner Bobby Ryan.

Add the 38-year-old Lundqvist and Ryan to an already deep free-agent pool, which is complicated this year by a flat salary cap. It remains at \$81.5 million because of money lost in the pandemic. Top free agents like St. Louis captain Alex Pietrangolo, fellow defenseman Torey Krug and 2018 MVP Taylor Hall might get a big payday, but there is no certainty what the market will look like given the cap and a lack of clarity about revenues next season.

"I wish I had the answer to that," New York Islanders GM Lou Lamoriello said. "Not only is this year the cap frozen, but I would anticipate that it will be likewise the next year."

Lamoriello said he thinks there will be more free agents available in 2021, and he and Poile agree there might be more players left on the market in coming months after the initial frenzy ends.

Before that, though, things will be busy. Even Tampa Bay and Dallas have work to do after just wrapping up a season that began a long year ago this week.

To re-sign key restricted free agents Anthony Cirelli, Mikhail Sergachev and Erik Cernak, the Lightning need to clear some \$10 million in cap space — and that's not accounting for unrestricted guys like back-to-back champion Pat Maroon and three defensemen who were key additions: Kevin Shattenkirk, Zach Bogosian and Luke Schenn.

The 2020-21 Lightning will look different than the group that celebrates this Cup victory.

Dallas has \$15 million in cap space, according to CapFriendly, but the Stars need to squeeze in new contracts for restricted free agent forwards Mattias Janmark, Roope Hintz, Radek Faksa and Denis Gurianov, all of whom were influential in their deep playoff run.

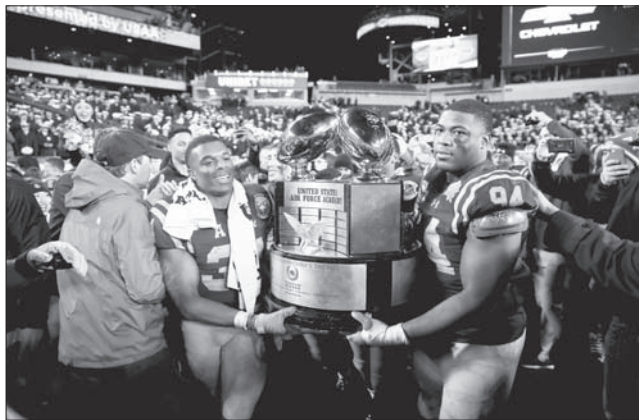
They may have to say goodbye to 34-year-old goaltender Anton Khudobin, who is a free agent after taking the Stars to the final.

AP sports writer Dan Gelston contributed.



Ben Margot/AP

The New York Rangers parted with one of the greatest netminders in franchise history on Wednesday when they bought out the final year of the 38-year-old Henrik Lundqvist's contract.



Matt Rourke/AP

Navy players carry the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy after defeating Army on Dec. 14 in Philadelphia. Last year Navy just edged out Air Force for the trophy. The two teams play Saturday in Colorado.

Navy-Air Force: There's
never been one like this

By JOHN FEINSTEIN
Special To The Washington Post

This isn't the way the first leg of the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy is supposed to be played. Then again, this is a year in which almost nothing in the world is taking place as normal.

Twelve months ago, when Air Force and Navy met in Annapolis in what turned out to be a football classic, each team had spent September building toward their annual first-Saturday-in-October meeting.

Air Force was 3-1, the loss coming at Boise State. Navy was 2-1, the loss coming at Memphis. It was already apparent that both teams were vastly improved; Air Force having gone 5-7 in 2018, while Navy had lived through a 3-10 nightmare of a fall.

The CIC, the trophy all service academy players covet most, was sitting for a second straight year at West Point, Army having swept both teams in 2017 and 2018.

Navy won on that sparkling late afternoon, marching 75 yards to take the lead with 23 seconds left on Malcolm Perry's 3-yard sprint into the end zone. Moments earlier, the Mids had faced fourth-and-1 from the Air Force 15-yard line and Perry had driven forward to pick up the first down — by half the length of the football.

As it turned out, that was the margin by which the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy was decided. Navy went on to beat Army and finish 11-2, one of the great turnaround seasons in college football history. Air Force didn't lose another game, also finishing 11-2 but coming up those inches



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Air Force head coach Troy Calhoun doesn't dwell on last year's last-second loss to Navy.

short of regaining the CIC.

"It hasn't been mentioned at all," Air Force Coach Troy Calhoun said Tuesday during a Zoom news conference, when the subject of last year's game came up. "You don't really talk about things from one season to another, particularly when it comes to service academy football. That was last year. We're focused right now strictly on practicing well the rest of the week and being ready for Saturday."

But this Saturday will be different than other Navy-Air Force Saturdays because of the coronavirus pandemic. Once upon a time, Navy was supposed to open this season in Ireland against Notre Dame. The pandemic took care of that trip and then wiped out the notion of Notre Dame

playing in Annapolis for the first time.

Instead, Navy opened on a disastrous Monday night against Brigham Young, losing 55-3. Then, the Mids' game against Temple was postponed by three weeks. Two weeks ago, after trailing Tulane 24-0 at halftime, the Mids rallied for what might have been a season-saving 27-24 victory.

Now, they head to Air Force on Saturday with a 1-1 record.

What kind of team will they face? There's no way to know because Air Force has yet to play a game. When the Mountain West Conference initially decided to not play football this fall, Air Force was granted permission to play Navy and Army — a two-game season.

Dozens of cadets who were on the roster at the end of spring practice were allowed by the academy to drop out of school for the fall semester so that they wouldn't lose a season of eligibility to play two games, according to the Colorado Springs Gazette. According to an academy spokesman, this is an option available to all cadets for health reasons — or, in this case, because of the pandemic.

Then, the Mountain West joined the parade of conferences that reversed course and decided to have a season. The conference is now scheduled to begin play Oct. 24, although Air Force doesn't have its schedule yet.

"We actually looked for a little bit at trying to schedule a game for September 26," Calhoun said Tuesday. "Now, we're waiting on a schedule from the Mountain West."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

WR Waddle takes on bigger role for Tide

He's next up with Ruggs and Jedy now playing in the NFL

By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

Jaylen Waddle has been one of the nation's most dangerous return men, and a big-play receiver since first stepping on the football field for Alabama.

The only thing holding him back: Four star receivers, one ball. There's still only one ball for the second-ranked Crimson Tide, but Waddle is higher on Alabama's target list now that Henry Ruggs III and Jerry Jedy left to become first-round NFL Draft picks.

"He's fun to watch, that's for sure," Tide coach Nick Saban said Monday, ahead of Alabama's home opener against No. 13 Texas A&M.

Waddle and DeVonta Smith still represent a formidable receiving duo for the Tide, as evidenced by their big games in the opening 38-19 win over Missouri. But Smith put up huge offensive numbers already last season, while Waddle could get targeted more than ever while remaining a threat returning punts.

Both are regarded as potential first-round draft picks.

Now Waddle has a greater mastery of all the receiving positions, too, so Alabama offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian can move him around more.

"Before he was mostly a slot guy, but now he can make plays anywhere on the field," Saban said Monday. "I think that's very helpful. You expect people to try to double (team) guys like him."
"So when you can move him around, it makes it a little bit more difficult for the defense."

Waddle picked up where he left off at the end of the regular season in 2019. He had three receiving touchdowns and a 98-yard kickoff return against Auburn in the finale and opened with two more TD catches versus Missouri in last week's opener. He finished with eight catches for 134 yards last Saturday.

The 5-foot-10, 182-pounder has been a reliable playmaker his first two seasons.

By the numbers

17.9

Alabama wide receiver Jaylen Waddle's yards-per-catch average on 86 career catches and 15 TDs.

24.4

His yards-per-punt return average last season, tops in the nation.

SOURCE: Associated Press

He's averaging 17.9 yards on his 86 career catches with 15 touchdowns.

But Waddle showed his electric potential throughout while returning punts, even when he wasn't getting the ball thrown his way with such regularity. He has led the Southeastern Conference and ranked in the Top-5 nationally as a freshman and sophomore. Last season his school-record 24.4-yard average easily led the nation.

Waddle's biggest plays against Missouri came as a receiver since he never got a ball punted to him. He leapt for one catch across the middle and immediately clutched the ball close with two Missouri defenders closing in to hit him.

"I kind of can see the defender through my eye so I kind of braced up a little bit," Waddle said.

But the "fun to watch" aspect of Waddle's open field also comes from his ability in the open field.

"I think when Jaylen Waddle gets the ball and he's in open space, everybody on the sideline starts to pay attention," Tide linebacker Christian Harris said.



L.G. PATTERSON/AP

Alabama wide receiver Jaylen Waddle, center, pulls down a reception between Missouri's Bryce Gillespie, right, and Ishmael Burdine during the first quarter of the Crimson Tide's 38-19 win Saturday at Missouri.



SEAN RAYFORD/AP

Tennessee's Kivon Bennett, second from right, and Deandre Johnson, left, converge on South Carolina quarterback Collin Hill during Saturday's game in Columbia, S.C.

Johnson adds some heat to Volunteers' pass rush

By TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

Senior linebacker Deandre Johnson is helping answer the questions about who would replace Darrell Taylor for No. 21 Tennessee.

Johnson had a career-high 2½ sacks, a career-high six tackles and a forced fumble while helping the Vols open the season with a 31-27 win at South Carolina. It was Tennessee's first win in Columbia since 2014. That earned the edge rusher honors Monday as the SEC defensive lineman of the week.

"Deandre's had a really good camp," Vols coach Jeremy Pruitt said Monday. "He's one of the guys that has not missed a practice. He's been here every day and it shows. He's practiced well every day. He's a guy that's been in our system for three years. He has some maturity about him, and he's really worked hard this offseason."

Taylor ranked second in the Southeastern Conference last season with 8½ sacks and finished his career with 19½ sacks overall before Seattle made him the 59th overall pick in the NFL Draft last April.

Johnson led all SEC players in sacks for the opening week, and it was the most by a Tennessee player since Taylor had four against Kentucky in November 2018. Two of his sacks came on third down. He also matched his career-high with 2½ tackles for loss.

And the 6-foot-3, 255-pound linebacker also had pressure on the Gamecocks' quarterback on a pass behind his receiver that was intercepted by Vols linebacker Henry To'o To'o and returned for a touchdown.

"He's got to do it week in and week out," Pruitt said of Johnson. "We need him to do that."

Tennessee finished with four sacks, good for third in the SEC and 12th nationally. The Vols, who ranked third in the SEC last season with 34 sacks, finished last season with four sacks in their comeback win over

Indiana in the Gator Bowl.

The Volunteers' top without defensive end Darel Middleton and defensive back Shawn Shamburger for the opener. Pruitt declined to say why the defenders weren't available during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I just don't think it's fair to the players to put out exactly why they're not there," Pruitt said. "Hopefully, if everything works out, we can get these guys back very soon."

Linebacker Kivon Bennett had a half sack, and defensive back Doneiko Slaughter also had a sack.

Now Tennessee prepares to host Missouri (0-1) on Saturday in the Vols' home opener. They beat Missouri 24-20 on the road last season during their six-game winning streak to finish the season. The winning streak is up to seven, tied for third-longest in FBS and longest in the SEC.

Tennessee has won eight of its last nine, including five straight in league play. But the Vols are just 1-3 against Missouri in Neyland Stadium.

Pruitt has some areas to focus on this week in practice, including trying to improve on third down after going 1-for-12 with the one conversion coming on an one-handed catch by wide receiver Brandon Johnson. The Vols allowed South Carolina to convert 6 of 15 third downs and had six penalties for 50 yards.

But Pruitt said there aren't any COVID-related concerns going into the home opener after missing a lot of players after students returned to campus in August. He said it's hard to get good at football without practicing and hopes to take advantage of having almost everybody available.

"Hopefully we can continue that this week and create some momentum and chemistry," Pruitt said. "All these phases, from the first game to the second game, is usually when you improve the most. We have lots of areas that we need to improve on."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Cyclones' Hall

faces stiff test

OU next for Big 12's leading rusher

BY ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

So far, so good for Breece Hall.

The Iowa State sophomore has continued the roll he was on to end 2019, leading the Big 12 and ranking third in the nation in rushing through two games. His first real test comes when No. 18 Oklahoma visits Ames, Iowa, on Saturday night.

"It's going to be a total different defense than what we faced a week ago, and that priority is going to be put on stopping the run game," Cyclones coach Matt Campbell said Tuesday. "It will be a really good challenge for our offensive line and for Breece, and we'll have to do a great job helping him find some creases throughout that football game."

Hall ran for 154 yards and matched his career high with three touchdowns in a 37-34 win at TCU. That followed a 103-yard, one-touchdown outing in the season-opening loss to Louisiana-Lafayette.

Oklahoma is first in the Big 12 and fourth nationally in run defense, allowing a total of 120 yards in two games and 2.4 yards per carry.

Hall has shown the ability to dent the Sooners. Last year, he ran for 110 yards and caught four

passes for 33 yards in a 42-41 loss in Norman, Okla. He had 79 of his rushing yards in the last 2½ quarters.

"Last year, the defense did a really good job getting on us early," Hall said. "They were flying around, they're real fast. It took a while for us to get settled in. Once we got comfortable, we got rolling. If we come out early and we're on our stuff, we should be fine."

Hall emerged the second half of his freshman year and is averaging 107 yards rushing with 13 touchdowns over his last 10 games.

Against TCU, he matched the longest run of his career with a 75-yard touchdown run, and his 32-yard burst for a TD gave the Cyclones a nine-point lead with under 3 minutes to play.

"Game 1, I came out and thought it was going to be a cakewalk, and I was definitely in for one (surprise) there," Hall said, referring to the 31-14 loss to Louisiana-Lafayette. "After that game I had a meeting with Campbell and we watched some film. We talked about how I could be better as a whole."

There hasn't been much to knock with Hall. His fumble in the opener is the only one in 251 touches over his 14 career games. He's allowed no quarterback pres-



BRANDON WADE/AP

Iowa State running back Breece Hall, top, leaps over a pile of players to score a touchdown during Saturday's game against TCU in Fort Worth, Texas. Hall finished the game with 154 yards rushing.

sures in 20 snaps as a pass protector the first two games, according to Pro Football Focus. He has two runs over 30 yards and five others of at least 10.

"We know Breece is really talented and has the ability to make really positive plays," Campbell said. "Sometimes as a young player, especially when you're having success, you maybe try to do too much. He should have the confidence he is a great player and know you have to stay within yourself."

For Hall, a win over Oklahoma certainly would make his stepfather happy. Jeff Smith backed up 1983 Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier at Nebraska and was part of two wins over the Sooners before he played four years in the NFL.

Hall and the Cyclones nearly got the job done last year after making up most of a 21-point, third-quarter deficit. Brock Purdy found tight end Charlie Kolar for a 13-yard touchdown pass with 24 seconds left to make

it a one-point game.

Campbell went for two points and the win, but Parnell Motley picked off a pass intended for La'Michael Pettway.

Hall said it was like being in a dream.

"I saw the ball in the air, I saw Charlie go and get it and it was crazy," Hall said. "And then once I saw Campbell signal for two, it was, 'Oh, yeah, we're going to win the game.' I was really excited. Unfortunately, it didn't come out that way."

North Dakota State ready to play only game of fall

BY DAVE KOLPACK
Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. — Perennial Football Championship Subdivision champion North Dakota State may play one division down from the big-time programs, but any doubts about its commitment to staying on top were answered when the Bison scheduled a single game this fall.

Coach Matt Entz made it clear he wanted the extra practice time to evaluate players and get more experience, despite "every day sitting on pins and needles" worrying about players becoming infected with the coronavirus. In the end, he said, the benefit of preparing for and playing Central Arkansas (2-1) on Saturday outweighs the risks and frustration of forcing to quarantine some players.

The Bison got four weeks of practice out of the deal.

"I think getting our team together and continuing to develop was a positive," Entz said. "Again, this is my opinion only so you can take it for that, but I don't think COVID was spread from the game of football. I didn't see it



SAM HODDE/AP

North Dakota State head coach Matt Entz raises the trophy alongside quarterback Trey Lance, right, as they celebrate winning the FCS championship on Jan. 11 in Frisco, Texas. The Bison have been practicing for the last month to prepare for their only game during the fall: Saturday's game against Central Arkansas.

spread at practice and I didn't see it spread in the weight room."

The game also gives the team's two highly touted pro prospects, sophomore quarterback Trey

Lance and senior left tackle Dillon Radunz, a chance for on-court performances on their home turf. Radunz has already said he is passing on the spring season and

Lance is likely to declare early for the NFL Draft.

Lance's astonishing statistics told the story of last year's unbeaten season. He set an NCAA record for all divisions by throwing 287 passes without an interception.

He passed for 2,786 yards and 28 touchdowns, rushed for 1,100 yards and 14 touchdowns, and set school records with 3,886 yards of total offense and a whopping 180.6 pass efficiency rating.

He has been mum about going pro and deflecting questions about his future Monday.

"I'm one thousand percent focused on winning this game and everything is just hypotheticals at this point," Lance said. "I'll let you guys talk about the NFL and all that, but that's not my job right now."

Radunz said playing in one last game was an easy decision and his reasoning spoke to the passion of the program.

"I am in the mindset of, I am a football player and this is what I do," he said. "Playing football is the best way to prepare for playing football."

Most North Dakota State play-

ers and fans aren't thrilled about a spring season and the Bison at one point were looking to schedule three fall games. Season ticket holder Nic Prothro said he offered to donate more money to the school for more autumn games, but added that one game is better than none.

"The hunger for football is there," he said. "Everyone has their own opinion. I'm not a big fan of the pandemic. I just feel it's getting blown out of proportion."

There comes a point in time where you need to get the world back."

It will be a strange afternoon for Bison fans. Only family members of players will be allowed inside the Fargodome, a move announced Tuesday that reversed an earlier decision to let about 8,000 fans inside the 19,000-seat arena.

It will be a rare Saturday for the players, as well, Bison defensive coordinator David Braun said.

"I think the hard part is not having another game on the horizon after that," Braun said. "The thing we keep pushing to our guys is that it's their own guaranteed opportunity. Better make the most of it."

NFL

More positive tests push Titans-Steelers back later in season

Tennessee first team struck with coronavirus

By TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The NFL postponed Sunday's Pittsburgh Steelers game at Tennessee until later in the season after one additional Titans player and one personnel member tested positive for COVID-19.

The announcement Thursday came one day after the league said it hoped to play the game on Monday or Tuesday. The NFL said a new game date would be announced "shortly."

"The decision to postpone the game was made to ensure the health and safety of players, coaches and game day personnel," the league said.

On Tuesday, the Titans (3-0) placed three players on the reserve/COVID-19 list, including key players defensive captain and lineman DaQuan Jones and long snapper Beau Brinkley. Outside linebacker Kamalei Correa became the fourth on that list Wednesday.

With the two new cases, the Titans' total is now 11: five players and six other organization members. That doesn't include outside linebackers coach Shane Bowen whose positive result came back Saturday, preventing him from traveling with Tennessee to Minnesota for a 31-30 win.

Coach Mike Vrabel said

Wednesday he was not among the group of five personnel, but he declined to identify any of those people who tested positive. Vrabel said some of those who tested positive were experiencing "flu-like" symptoms.

Now the NFL has to figure out how to reschedule a game between two of its seven undefeated teams after the league's first COVID-19 outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The simplest scenario for rescheduling is Week 7 on Oct. 25. That's the Titans' bye. Pittsburgh is scheduled to play at Baltimore that week, but both the Steelers and Ravens have byes in Week 8 allowing the NFL to make a change affecting only one other team.

The challenge is turning this week into a bye for both Tennessee and Pittsburgh and comes after both teams started preparing to play as early as Monday. The Titans, who played in the AFC championship game in January, and the Steelers, revived with quarterback Ben Roethlisberger back now, may be playing without a break through the rest of the regular season.

Pittsburgh hosts Philadelphia on Oct. 11. Buffalo is scheduled to visit Tennessee that day, the next game that could be affected depending on how the Titans' outbreak continues.



ADRIAN KRAUS/AP

Buffalo Bills offensive coordinator Brian Daboll, left, and quarterback Josh Allen, lead one of the NFL's most explosive teams three weeks into the season.

Passing fancy: Allen, Daboll oversee Bills' revved-up attack

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Bills quarterback Josh Allen was an impressive rookie in 2018 still trying to figure out what made Brian Daboll tick when Buffalo's first-year offensive coordinator shared a story of how he quit chewing tobacco.

It came down to Daboll winning a bet with members of a former team's coaching staff that he could stop cold turkey.

"That's just the type of person he is. If you dare him to do something, you bet him to do something, he's going to do everything in his power to make sure he comes through," Allen said Wednesday.



Buffalo Bills (3-0)
at Las Vegas Raiders (2-1)
AFN-Atlantic
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
5:25 a.m. Monday JKT

am I," Allen said, noting Daboll will bet the quarterback milkshakes to see if he can hit a target in practice.

Allen's 1,038 yards passing rank second in the NFL, and are the first by a Bills player through three weeks of a season. He's also the NFL's first player ever to have at least 10 touchdowns passing and two rushing through Week 3 of a season.

And thus far, Allen's put to rest questions about his accuracy. After ranking last among 32 starters in completion rate in each of his first two seasons, Allen has completed 71.1% of his attempts, which ranks seventh in the NFL.

"He bets on himself."

In many ways, Allen realized, he's no different than Daboll.

"He's very, very competitive, as

Foles gets another shot to show he's more than a good backup

By ANDREW SELIGMAN
Associated Press

Coach Matt Nagy sensed the calm in Nick Foles as the veteran quarterback led the Chicago Bears to another comeback victory last week.

It struck him right before the go-ahead touchdown pass to Anthony Miller at Atlanta. Foles made an adjustment in the huddle to account for a blitz, then dropped back out of the shotgun on third down and hit his target in stride on a post route.

"He just was kind of in his own zone, and I could just tell, like, not to mess with him," Nagy said Wednesday. "Just let him go, he's in a good place right now."

Foles gets another chance to show he's more than just a good arm out of the bullpen when the Bears host the Indianapolis Colts on Sunday. The Super Bowl 52 MVP took over for Mitchell Trubisky in the third quarter last week and threw three touchdowns in the fourth as the Bears erased a 16-point deficit on the way to a 30-26 victory.



BEVYN ANDERSON/AP

Chicago Bears quarterback Nick Foles, who led the Bears to a come-from-behind win last week against Atlanta, will start this week.

The Bears announced he is their No. 1 quarterback. And he'll make his first start since Week 13 last season with Jacksonville.

"I feel really comfortable," Foles said. "And I think that going in this week, there have been a lot of great conversations. Even

last game, I felt more of myself when I stepped into that situation just playing and getting to just do things that I like to do in a chaotic situation."

Foles has been everything from a starter to a castoff over nine seasons with five teams.



Indianapolis Colts (2-1)
at Chicago Bears (3-0)
AFN-Atlantic
7 p.m. Sunday CET
2 a.m. Monday JKT

He moved into the top spot with Philadelphia in 2017 after Carson Wentz suffered a season-ending injury and wound up leading the Eagles to their first Super Bowl title. Foles was the MVP in the biggest game of all — a 41-33 victory over Tom Brady and the New England Patriots.

He returned to a backup role behind Wentz in 2018. He then signed a big contract with Jacksonville, only to lose his starting job to rookie Gardner Minshew in an injury-filled season. His wife also had a miscarriage in May

2019. "You get an opportunity to instill confidence and calmness with your teammates and your coaches in a chaotic moment, and that's just something throughout the years, going through trials, going through tough times, it's just equipped," he said.

"It's never fun to go through those tough times, but it's a big reason why stepping into those moments, I just don't worry about it too much. I just go out there and be fearless as much as I can be."

The Bears acquired Foles for a fourth-round pick from the Jaguars in the offseason to compete with Trubisky, the No. 2 pick in the 2017 draft. Foles' knowledge of the system and history with Nagy and offensive coordinator Bill Lazor were also factors.

Nagy decided to make the switch last week after Trubisky got intercepted by Bliidi Wreh-Wilson. But he was also annoyed by the Bears' struggles to score.

Now 31, Foles gets another chance to show he's more than just a good backup. He's looking forward to it.

NBA

LeBron, Lakers batter Heat in Game 1

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — LeBron James finally got an easy Game 1 in the NBA Finals.

A very easy one, at that.

Anthony Davis scored 34 points, James had 25 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists and the Los Angeles Lakers rolled past the Miami Heat 116-98 on Wednesday night.

"The bigger the moment, he's just raising his play," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said about Davis, who was making his finals debut and made it look easy.

The Heat were left beaten and battered. Point guard Goran Dragic left in the second quarter and a person with knowledge of the situation said he was diagnosed with a torn plantar fascia in his left foot — which obviously jeopardizes his availability for the rest of the finals. And All-Star center Bam Adebayo left in the third quarter after apparently aggravating a left shoulder strain.

"We're much better than we showed tonight," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "You have to credit the Lakers, and we'll get to work for the next one."

Game 2 is Friday night.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 13 points, Danny Green had 11 and Alex Caruso finished with 10 for the Lakers. They returned to the finals for the first time in a decade and sent a very clear message: James' teams had been 1-8 in Game 1 of past finals, with losses in each of the last seven openers.

Not this one.

"We kind of picked it up on both ends of the floor," Davis said.

Jimmy Butler fought through a twisted left ankle to score 23 points for Miami. Kendrick Nunn added 18 points, Tyler Herro had 14 and Jae Crowder 12.

"I, and we, are here for him," Butler said about Dragic. "We know how much he wants to win, how much he wants to go to war and battle with us. And obviously, we love him for that and we want him out there with us. But whatever the docs tell him is that's what he's got to do. ... He's got to take care of himself first."

Adebayo was held to eight points in 21 minutes, and Miami went with subs for a fourth-quarter burst that turned a total



PHOTOS BY MARK J. TERRILL/AP

The Lakers' Anthony Davis, left, bumps shoulders with LeBron James while celebrating after a dunk against the Miami Heat during Game 1 of the NBA Finals on Wednesday in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Los Angeles won 116-98.

out into something only slightly more palatable in terms of final margin.

The Lakers did whatever they wanted. They outbounded Miami 54-36, led by as many as 32 points, and made 15 three-pointers — a big number for a team that doesn't necessarily count on piling up that many points from beyond the arc. They're 21-5 this season when making at least 14 threes.

The only stretch that provided hope for Miami came in the first six minutes. The Heat scored on six consecutive possessions in what became a 13-0 run to take a 23-10 lead midway through the opening period.

So, the first six minutes were fine for Miami. Everything else was all Lakers.

"You have to get a feel for how hard Miami plays," James said. "They smacked us in the mouth and we got a sense of that. ... From that moment when it was 23-10, we started to play to our capabilities."

James became the seventh player to appear in 50 NBA Finals games and passed Michael Jordan and George Mikan for fifth in finals free throws made.

Finalist spot: The Heat fell to 1-5 in Game 1 of title series. All three of Miami's championships have come after dropping the opener.

Silver: League still hopes to open next season in arenas

Associated Press

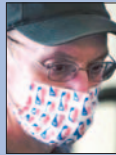
LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — NBA Commissioner Adam Silver reiterated Wednesday that the league's hope is to begin next season with teams in their home arenas and with fans in the seats, though cautioned that there are still numerous unknowns to work through before any plan can be finalized.

Silver, in his annual state-of-the-league address — before Game 1 of the NBA Finals, also said the protocols that allowed the league to get through a restart in a so-called bubble at Walt Disney World — such as strict adherence to mask-wearing and social distancing — proved that a balance can be struck "between public health and economic necessity."

"It's certainly our goal," Silver said, referring to playing in arenas. "But it's dependent on some additional advancements. Rapid testing may be the key here."

The NBA was the first major sports league to shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic on March 11, and it took more than four months to come up with the plan to restart the season at Disney.

The league still hasn't decided when free agency will start, what the salary cap will be for next season, what the tax line will be and other key details. All of that will have to be worked out with the National Basketball Players Association, and Silver said he expects talks to intensify on those matters once the NBA Finals are over.



Silver

Scoreboard

NBA Finals	
At Lake Buena Vista, Fla. (Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)	
L.A. Lakers 116, Miami 98	
Wednesday	L.A. Lakers 116, Miami 98
Friday	Miami 98, Lakers 116
Saturday	CT, 10 a.m. Saturday (TK)
Sunday	Game 3 (AFL Sports, 1:30 a.m. SportsCenter, 8:30 a.m. Saturday (TK))
Tuesday	Game 4
Friday, Oct. 9	Game 5
x-Sunday, Oct. 11	Game 6
x-Tuesday, Oct. 13	Game 7

Wednesday
Lakers 116, Miami 98

MIAMI	Butler 8-13 5-23, Crowder 4-9 0-2, Adebayo 2-10 2-8, Dragic 3-9 0-6, Robinson 0-3 0-0 0, Hill 2-6 0-4, Olynyk 1-5 2-4, Igoudala 3-7 0-0, Jones Jr. 1-2 0-2, Herro 6-12 0-1, Nunn 5-11 0-0 18, Totals 98-113-14-98
L.A. LAKERS	Davis 11-21 10-10 34, James 9-17 5-6 25, Howard 0-0 2-2, Caldwell-Pope 3-10 5-13, Green 4-9 0-0 11, Dudley 0-0 0-0, Kuzma 1-7 0-3, Morris 3-8 0-8, Smith 0-0 0-0, Caruso 4-6 1-10, Cook 1-1 0-3, Rondo 2-7 2-7, Totals 116-98-25-27 116
Miami	28 20 20 19 31-98
L.A. Lakers	31 34 28-116
Three-point	Goals—Miami 11-35 (Crowder 4-7, Butler 2-4, Nunn 2-4, Herro 2-8, Igoudala 1-2, Olynyk 0-2, Robinson 0-3, Hill 0-4), L.A. 15-38 (Green 9-8, Morris 2-3, Davis 2-4, James 2-4, Caldwell-Pope 2-4, Caruso 2-4, Rondo 1-1, Rondo 1-5), Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Miami 36 (Igoudala, Nunn, Olynyk 5), L.A. 44 (James 14, Davis 12, Igoudala 6), L.A. Lakers 26 (James 9), Total Fouls—Miami 15, L.A. Lakers 19.

Associated Press

The Miami Heat were not only badly beaten. They were beaten up.

Bam Adebayo (left shoulder strain) and Goran Dragic (left foot) departed with injuries and Jimmy Butler played through one in Game 1 of the NBA Finals. A series that started so impressively for the Heat could be a short one if their three best players are out or limited.

They were blown out 116-98 by the Los Angeles Lakers on Wednesday, but their concerns go beyond how they can compete.

The bigger question might be: Who can't?

Dragic didn't play in the second half because of a torn left plantar fascia, a person with knowledge of the details told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no official announcement was made.

It was unclear how or when the veteran guard was hurt, or if he will be able to play in the remain-



The Miami Heat's Goran Dragic, center, reportedly didn't play in the second half because of a torn left plantar fascia. It's unclear if the veteran guard will be able to play in the remainder of the series.

"We know how much he wants to win, how much he wants to go to war and battle with us," Butler said. "Obviously we love him for that and we want him out there

with us." Just before halftime, Butler turned his left ankle on a drive to the basket. He was able to stay on the floor after a timeout for the final seconds, but the injury

still appeared to be bothering him in the second half. The star swingman appeared to be hobbling when he landed after scoring while being fouled 13 seconds into the third quarter.

He said he felt some soreness after the game but would be OK with treatment.

"I've got to be ready to go, so we'll see how it feels tomorrow but I'll be fine," he said.

Adebayo's shoulder crashed hard into Dwight Howard as he drove into the lane with 7:03 left in the third quarter. Adebayo, Miami's All-Defensive team center, was clearly hurting during the Eastern Conference finals against Boston.

The Heat said X-rays taken at the arena were negative. Coach Erik Spoelstra said he wasn't sure if Adebayo had a lingering injury from the previous series.

The Heat will try to bounce back Friday in Game 2. They just don't know yet who can help them try to do it.

SPORTS



Rolling start
LeBron leads Lakers in Game 1
rout of Heat » **NBA Finals, Page 55**



MLB PLAYOFFS

September Madness

Whirlwind day features eight postseason games in 10 hours

By NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

Shortly after noon in Atlanta, Nick Senzel of the Cincinnati Reds slapped the first pitch from Max Fried to right field for a single, beginning a day of baseball unlike any that had come before.

Eight postseason games, all starting in a span of around 10 hours.

"This is like September Madness," Houston manager Dusty Baker said. "It's going to be mad."

Wednesday indeed had a bit of an NCAA Tournament feel, with a smorgasbord of playoff games starting early in the afternoon and lasting long into the night as the Yankees finished off Cleve-

'Our country needs it. It's very therapeutic.'

Dave Roberts
Los Angeles Dodgers manager

land early Thursday in the longest nine-inning game in major league history.

For much of the 20th century, baseball had a maximum of seven games in any single postseason. Wednesday alone had more than that, the result of an expanded field for 2020 that included 16 teams after a regular season shortened to 60 games by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Our country needs it. It's very therapeutic," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said before his team's night game against Milwaukee. "It's a diversion."

"September Madness" included baseball's version of a buzzer beater — a walk-off hit by Atlanta's Freddie Freeman — and two series victories by lower seeds. Although the Houston Astros and New York Yankees may not fit the public's definition of a Cinderella.

The last two games went well past 1 a.m. Eastern time, and by the end of the night, baseball's Sweet 16 was reduced by three after the Minnesota Twins, Toronto Blue Jays and Cleveland Indians were eliminated. The final game of the

SEE MADNESS ON PAGE 50

The Braves' Freddie Freeman, center, celebrates driving in the game-winning run against the Cincinnati Reds during the 13th inning of Game 1 of their National League wild-card series Wednesday in Atlanta. The Braves won 1-0.

JOHN BAZEMORE/AP



Positive tests push back Titans-Steelers » NFL, Page 54

