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Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, MAY 25, 2024 • \$3

Russians disabling U.S. arms in Ukraine

Kyiv documents show how accuracy rates fall amid electronic jamming

BY ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN AND ALEX HORTON

KYIV — Many U.S.-made satellite-guided munitions in Ukraine have failed to withstand Russian jamming technology, prompting Kyiv to stop using certain types of Western-provided armaments after effectiveness rates plummeted, according to senior Ukrainian military officials and confidential internal Ukrainian assessments obtained by The Washington Post.

Russia's jamming of the guidance systems of modern Western weapons, including Excalibur GPS-guided artillery shells and the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, which can fire some U.S.-made rockets with a range of up to 50 miles, has eroded Ukraine's ability to defend its territory and has left officials in Kyiv urgently seeking help from the Pentagon to obtain upgrades from arms manufacturers.

Russia's ability to combat the high-tech munitions has far-reaching implications for Ukraine and its Western supporters — potentially providing a blueprint for adversaries such as China and Iran — and it is a key reason Moscow's forces have regained the initiative and are advancing on the battlefield.

The success rate for the U.S.-designed Excalibur shells, for example, fell to 10 percent, according to a document seen by The Washington Post. SEE UKRAINE ON A10

Fla. law's impact seen at clinics up East Coast

30% have longer wait times for abortions as women make trek north

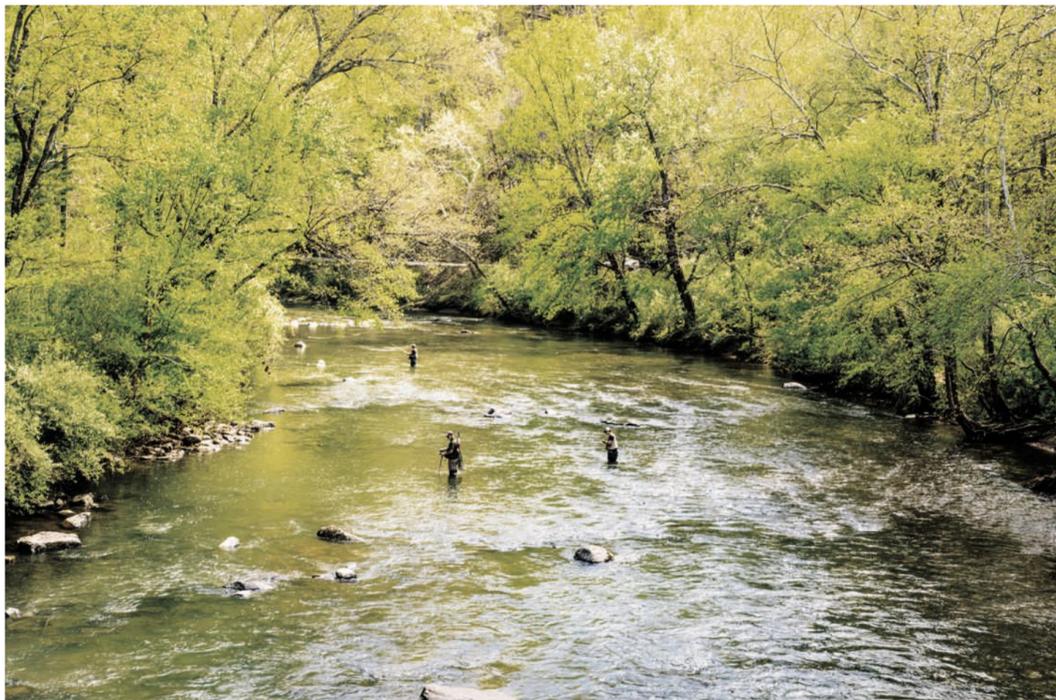
BY CAITLIN GILBERT, CAROLINE KITCHENER AND JANICE KAI CHEN

Clinics up the East Coast have seen a surge in patient traffic since a law banning most abortions in Florida went into effect on May 1 — but so far they have not experienced the collapse in care that many providers had feared before the new restrictions began in the country's third most populous state, according to new data collected by a research team at Middlebury College.

Wait times for abortion appointments have increased at approximately 30 percent of clinics across North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and D.C., the areas closest to Florida where abortion remains legal after six weeks of pregnancy, according to the data, which is based on a survey of clinics before and after the law went into effect. North Carolina experienced the sharpest increases, with wait times rising in half of the state's 16 clinics.

The average Florida resident now lives about 590 miles from the nearest clinic that offers abortions after six weeks and will need to travel an average of 1,000 miles to reach one. SEE ABORTION ON A8

Boy Scouts love this scenic river.



JUSTIN IDE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Locals say they're ruining it.

BY GREGORY S. SCHNEIDER IN ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.

Anne McClung was tending horses in her 19th-century barn one day last summer when she noticed a change in the Maury River flowing swiftly nearby. She's known the river all her 76 years, but it didn't take a practiced eye to recognize clouds of silt in the normally clear waters.

McClung could think of only one cause: The Boy Scouts.

The National Capital Area Council of the Scouts, based in Bethesda, has maintained a campground and lake a few miles upstream from McClung's home for almost six decades. In recent times, the Scouts have drained the lake every fall, causing sediment to pour into one of Virginia's most famous and well-loved rivers.

Last year, the Scouts drained the lake in August at peak season for the Maury, driving anglers, kayakers and swimmers out of the water. Resentment among local residents boiled over. Now they've organized an effort to fight back against what they see as mounting damage to a precious local resource. But with little legal authority and conflicting governmental mandates, the Maury River Alliance is struggling to make a difference.

"We have to do something. We can't let it go unaddressed, unchallenged," said alliance member George Kosovic, 73, whose family has long owned property along the river.

The situation has created an unusual standoff between local residents and an organization known for honor and stewardship, though plagued in recent years by controversy and financial trouble, leading to a decision this month to rebrand as Scouting America. The Boy Scouts have taught generations of young people how to enjoy and care for the outdoors in these mountains, but letters to local newspapers regularly cast the D.C. group as out-of-touch.

SEE RIVER ON A5

Anglers cast lines in the Maury River as it comes through Goshen Pass near Lexington, Va. A Boy Scout chapter maintains a lake nearby, sediment from which pours into the river when the lake is drained.

VETERANS, INC.

Shadow industry swoops in for a slice of victims' benefits

Firms pledge to boost disability checks under new law allocating billions for burn-pit exposure

BY LISA REIN

Senators savored the moment on a summer day outside the Capitol — the passage of a sweeping, bipartisan agreement to add \$280 billion in new benefits and health care for millions of veterans exposed to toxic burn pits.

More than a year after taking effect, the Honoring our Pact Act has proved enormously popular. This week, President Biden announced that more than 1 million disability claims have been approved under the new law.

But glitches, slowdowns and other mishaps have dogged the program's rollout by the Department of Veterans Affairs, enabling the growth of an unregulated shadow industry that promises to drastically boost tax-free disability checks, according to lawmakers, advocates and leaders in the claims industry — in exchange for veterans signing away thousands of dollars in future benefits.

SEE VETERANS ON A6

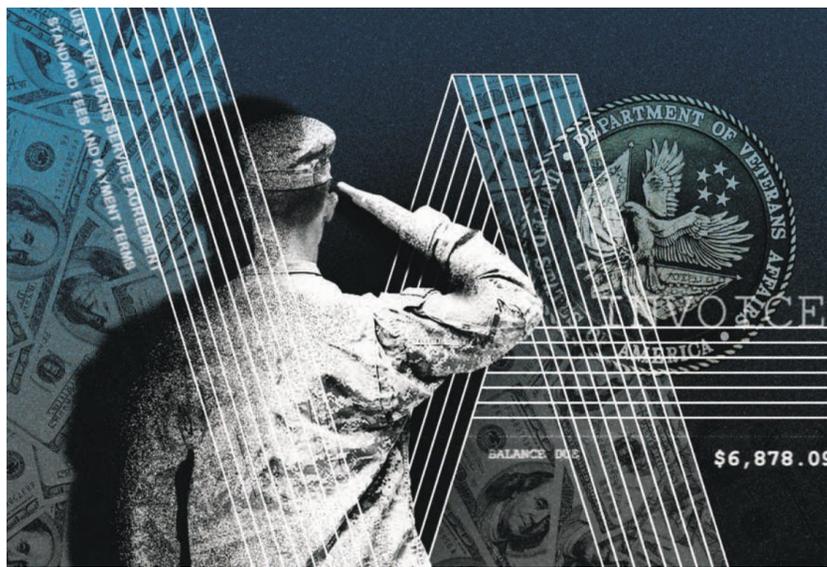


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Ruling deepens Israel's isolation

ICJ DEMANDS HALT TO RAFAH ASSAULT

Order difficult to enforce without U.S. support

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK AND ELLEN FRANCIS

A ruling Friday from the International Court of Justice ordering an immediate halt to Israel's military offensive in Rafah marked a stunning rebuke of the Israeli leadership's prosecution of the war in Gaza, including the decision to send troops and tanks into a city where more than a million Palestinians had sought refuge.

The incursion into Gaza's southernmost city, which began May 7, has already displaced more than 800,000 people, the court said, calling the developments "exceptionally grave." Israel must halt the operation and open the Rafah crossing for the "unhindered" provision of aid, the judges said, adding that the offensive could destroy Palestinian life in Gaza.

Israeli officials swiftly indicated that they would ignore the ruling, which is binding but difficult to enforce, even as the high-profile judgment deepened Israel's isolation on the world stage.

On Monday, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor said that he was seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. SEE GAZA ON A11

Lawsuits tie 3 companies to massacre in Uvalde

Victims' families allege rifle maker, Activision, Meta bear responsibility

BY ARELIS R. HERNÁNDEZ AND NAOMI NIX

SAN ANTONIO — The lawyer who won a record-setting settlement for Sandy Hook families announced two lawsuits Friday on behalf of the relatives of Uvalde school shooting victims against the manufacturer of the AR-15-style weapon used in the attack, as well as the publisher of Call of Duty video games and the social media giant Meta.

The lawsuits against Daniel Defense, known for its high-end rifles; Activision, the manufacturer of the Call of Duty first-person-shooter series; and Meta, the parent company of Facebook, may be the first of their kind to connect aggressive firearms marketing tactics on social media and gaming platforms to the actions of a mass shooter.

The complaints contend the three companies are responsible for "grooming" a generation of "socially vulnerable" young men radicalized to live out violent video game fantasies in the real world with easily accessible weapons of war.

One of those men, the legal team argues, was Robb Elementary School shooter Salvador Torres. SEE UVALDE ON A4

IN THE NEWS

Gang attack Three people from a U.S.-based missionary group, including the daughter and son-in-law of a Missouri lawmaker, were shot and killed in Haiti. A10

A proper send-off College graduations are even sweeter for students whose high school ceremonies were canceled due to covid. B1

THE NATION **Cancer-causing** benzene pollution from oil refineries is down, an analysis concluded. A3 **The drug Ozempic** lowers the risk of death from kidney disease, a major study found. A8

THE WORLD **The U.S.** is largely financing and arming the Kenya-led mission to stop gangs in Haiti. A9 **The pope** cleared the way for the first millennial saint, teen blogger Carlo Acutis. A11

THE ECONOMY **Retailers** such as Target, Walmart and Aldi are rolling back costs in their food aisles as consumers pull back. A12

OBITUARIES **Morgan Spurlock**, 53, created a hit while eating only McDonald's for 30 days for his film "Super Size Me." B4

THE REGION **A Marine** war veteran who prosecutors said carried a tomahawk during the Jan. 6 riot was sentenced to two years in prison. B1 **A lawsuit** seeking to hold a Bethesda, Md., prep school liable for a student's suicide is likely to move forward. B1

STYLE **President Biden's** state dinner at the White House for the leader of Kenya included an unexpected guest. C1

SPORTS **D.C. is attempting** to host an NFL draft in the nation's capital as soon as 2027, but the competition is intense. D1

BUSINESS NEWS.....A12
COMICS.....C5
OBITUARIES.....B4
OPINION PAGES.....A13
TELEVISION.....C3
WORLD NEWS.....A9

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The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53862

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OPM instructs agencies to support domestic violence victims seeking time off



Federal Insider

JOE DAVIDSON

The revolting video of Sean “Diddy” Combs hurling Cassie Ventura, his former girlfriend, to the floor, then kicking and dragging her, brutally demonstrates the need to protect domestic abuse victims.

There are far too many Venturas, including in the federal service.

Their pain can be more than physical and psychological. The financial hit could be as severe as Combs’s kicks, not just for the person, but also for the public. After CNN released a video of the beating last week, Combs acknowledged his actions, saying in a statement that he was “truly sorry.” But apologies, such as his, do not make any pain disappear.

Recognizing this economic reality and the various traumas of domestic or intimate abuse, two days before the video was released the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) instructed federal agencies “to provide

enhanced support to federal workers seeking safety and recovering from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other related forms of abuse or harassment, including technological abuse.”

In a memorandum to government leaders, Robert H. Shriver III, OPM’s acting director, said the Biden administration “is committed to supporting the safety of our employees and providing them flexibility to recover from trauma, helping employees remain in good standing in their jobs to safeguard their financial independence, rebuild, and heal.”

The leave may be used for a variety of purposes, according to OPM, including:

- Seeking medical and mental health treatment
- Obtaining housing
- Securing services for domestic abuse survivors
- Attending court hearings related to domestic violence, including protective orders and child custody.

OPM declined requests to interview Shriver and other OPM

officials. By email, the agency said “safe leave,” its term for time off for domestic abuse issues, “is not a new type of leave entitlement” for federal workers. Instead, it uses existing leave programs. The time off feeds take because of domestic abuse could be paid or unpaid depending, in OPM’s terms, on policies “available to them that may apply in situations involving safe leave purposes.” Shriver’s memo said OPM’s directive was needed because “the leave system for Federal employees was not constructed with concepts of safe leave in mind.”

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) welcomed the administration’s action, saying in an interview that intimate abuse leave for federal workers “should have been granted some time ago.” Citing the trauma of domestic violence, she added “the least that can be done, it seems to me for federal employees, is to allow them to take time off . . . to address their own safety and even the safety of their family members.”

That leave, she said, should be “of course with pay. Otherwise, it

seems to me that it would be very difficult to take time off.” Last year, a White House report on a “U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence” (GBV) endorsed forms of paid leave as “important work-related policies that may help prevent abuse and assist survivors to address and recover from GBV.”

Katie Ray-Jones, CEO of the National Domestic Violence Hotline (which is funded by the U.S. government) praised the new policy. “I think it sets a really good role model for the rest of our country,” she said.

While “more and more” business and organizations, even small ones, are developing policies to support domestic violence victims, intimate abuse leave is “not incredibly common,” she added, and even less so for paid leave.

Yet, “the needs are vast,” Ray-Jones continued. “So, it’s important that employers have opportunities in place to just really ensure that victims don’t have a financial impact. Financial abuse is present in almost 98 percent of abusive relationships.” Examples of

financial abuse are taking a partner’s money and sabotaging their employment by disturbing their workplaces, she said.

The financial impact on individuals compounds a national, macroeconomic impact of domestic violence.

In 2014 “the estimated intimate partner violence lifetime cost” was \$103,767 for female victims and \$23,414 for male victims, according to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. That amounts to “a population economic burden of nearly \$3.6 trillion . . . over victims’ lifetimes.”

Other statistics demonstrate the breadth of the problem. Almost one-third of women and nearly 25 percent of men have experienced “severe physical violence” by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime, according to the 2022 “National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey” published by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2023, about 10 percent of the 431,213 people who contacted the Hotline were male.

While the OPM guidance to

agencies is new, the groundwork was laid well in advance. Last year’s 150-page White House document says paid leave policies “foster an inclusive workforce and support survivors who need to take time away from work to seek safety or recover from GBV.”

Introducing the report, President Biden said “no one — no one, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, should experience abuse. Period. And if they do, they should have the services and support they need to get through it.”

The Republican chairmen of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee and its subcommittee on the federal workforce, Reps. James Comer (Ky.) and Pete Sessions (Tex.), respectively, did not respond to a request for comment.

“Federal employees should feel fully supported to take time off and address their safety or a member of their family’s safety,” said a statement by Shriver. “Domestic violence, stalking, and other forms of abuse and harassment have no place in the workplace.”

The Washington Post

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TO REACH THE OPINION PAGES

Letters to the editor:
letters@washpost.com or call 202-334-6215
Opinion:
oped@washpost.com

Published daily (ISSN 0190-8286).
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Washington Post, 1301 K St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071.
Periodicals postage paid in Washington, D.C., and additional mailing office.

CORRECTION

• A May 23 Metro article about the nomination for Montgomery County police chief incorrectly said in the headlines that Marc Yamada was tapped after a national search. The national search had been for the current chief, Marcus Jones, not Yamada.

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Hunter Biden may face deeply painful evidence at trial

Prosecutors expect to call ex-wife, brother’s widow to document drug abuse

BY MATT VISER

Hunter Biden, in a trial scheduled to get underway in two weeks, could face testimony from his ex-wife and his brother’s widow, with whom he became romantically involved, according to new filings from federal prosecutors that illustrate just how messy the seemingly simple court case could turn.

The filings from special counsel David Weiss provide a window into prosecutors’ plans and how they may reopen some of the most painful moments in the Biden family’s past, potentially embarrassing not only Hunter Biden but also a president whose political career has long been defined by a close-knit family that stuck together through difficult times.

In black and white, the court papers detail the depth of family members’ turmoil as they struggled to grapple with the death of President Biden’s oldest son, Beau, in 2015, and the drug and alcohol addiction of his younger son, Hunter. The family divisions were deepened when Hunter began a romance with Beau’s widow, Hallie.

Hunter Biden has been charged with falsely declaring — on a form he was required to fill out to buy a gun in 2018 — that he was not using illegal drugs. By calling women close to Hunter Biden as witnesses and introducing contemporaneous text messages, prosecutors appear to be trying to prove he was in fact abusing drugs at the time he filled out the form. Biden has admitted he was using drugs at the time, including in his memoir.

“I am afraid you are going to die,” Hallie wrote to Hunter at a time when he was in possession of the gun, according to one of the text messages entered into the court record by prosecutors. Two minutes later, she added: “And I can’t live without you.”

Hunter Biden’s lawyers declined to comment for this article. Federal prosecutors also declined to comment.

Hunter Biden has largely stabilized his life, his friends and associates say, having remarried and relocated to California, but those close to him and the president worry about the toll the upcoming trial could take on someone who has struggled with addiction for much of his life. While he has viewed the process of making amends and admitting mistakes as part of his recovery, the court documents show just how painful some of that could be.

“I am not doing this. You have to get sober for your 5 kids and me,” Hallie Biden wrote in another text message. “Bottom line. Or you lose everyone slowly.”

Much about the case is not in dispute. In Hunter Biden’s published memoir, which prosecutors have submitted as evidence, Hunter Biden described himself as someone who was “up twenty-four hours a day, smoking every fifteen minutes, seven days a week.”

“All my energy revolved around smoking drugs and making arrangements to buy drugs — feeding the beast,” he wrote.

Prosecutors in their latest filings indicate that they will use the text messages to confirm and



MATT ROURKE/AP

Prosecutors are planning to present testimony from Hunter Biden’s ex-wife and his brother’s widow detailing his drug addiction. Hunter Biden is facing a June trial in Delaware on charges of falsely declaring that he was not using drugs on a form to buy a gun.

flesh out details from the book, such as one message in which Hunter Biden describes waiting for a drug dealer at an intersection in Wilmington, Del. “I was sleeping on a car smoking crack on 4th Street and Rodney,” he wrote.

Prosecutors are also planning to show images of drug paraphernalia and of Hunter Biden smoking crack that were backed up on his Apple iCloud account or his laptop.

The case centers on a claim Biden made, on the forms required to buy a gun on Oct. 12, 2018, that he was not addicted to illegal drugs — when, the indictment says, “he knew that statement was false and fictitious.”

About two weeks after the purchase of the gun, Hallie Biden threw the weapon in a trash can behind a grocery store that is located across the street from a high school. A man searching for recyclables discovered the gun and turned it in.

“You have lost your mind hunter,” Hallie Biden wrote to Hunter Biden in one of the text messages. “I’m sorry I handled it poorly today but you are in huge denial about yourself and about that reality that I just want you safe. You run away like a child . . . It’s to be expected that you go, you prove repeatedly that you can’t stay and really do work on yourself. It’s easier for you to avoid looking within and cowardly to constantly blame the blame on me.”

Barbara McQuade, a law professor at the University of Michi-

gan and a former U.S. attorney, said that the case was fairly straightforward and that it was unclear why prosecutors would include so much detail in a filing so close to the trial.

“If Weiss wanted to pressure Biden, he certainly could have shared all of this information with Biden’s attorneys without filing it in a public document,” she wrote in an email. “Not sure what he is accomplishing by filing it publicly, other than perhaps prompting the witnesses to urge Biden to plead guilty.”

Still, prosecutors may face challenges at trial. Hunter Biden’s team is likely to argue that prosecutors rarely pursue someone for such a minor violation unless it is tied to a more serious crime.

Defense lawyers also could cite a recent revelation in court documents that at the time of the gun purchase, the store workers made copies of Hunter Biden’s passport but did not document viewing any ID with an address as required. Three years later, when the case became more controversial and officials asked for the original form, the shop owner decided to add more information to suggest he had also checked Hunter’s car registration.

The defense team could argue that this calls into question the validity of the original form, and therefore the seriousness of Hunter Biden’s offense if he lied on it.

If he is convicted, the maximum sentence for the most serious crime in the indictment would be 10 years in prison, al-

though he probably would face far less time under federal sentencing guidelines. Prosecutors and Hunter Biden’s team were close to a plea deal a year ago, but it collapsed when the two sides could not agree on whether it would preclude future charges against Hunter.

Hunter Biden and his attorneys for months have attempted to delay the trial, as well as a separate tax evasion case in California. Weiss, who is overseeing both prosecutions, has vigorously objected to the delays.

U.S. District Judge Maryellen Noreika, who is presiding over the gun case in Delaware, has set an opening day of June 3. U.S. District Judge Mark C. Scarsi, the judge in California, has indicated that the tax case will get underway on June 20, although there is a hearing on Wednesday to determine whether it should be delayed.

Weiss’s team has also entered a significant amount of sensitive material in the California case, according to recent government filings. It includes emails and texts between Hunter Biden and his children and his uncle, documents from his divorce case with Kathleen Buhle, and tax forms from Hallie Biden.

But it is the live witnesses in Delaware who may get the most attention. The court documents do not name them, but provide descriptions that make it clear who they are.

Buhle, who divorced Hunter Biden in April 2017, is described as someone who “was previously married to the defendant.” After their divorce, it says, “through 2018 she would check his vehicle from time to time because she did not want their children in a vehicle with drugs.”

“While searching his vehicles, she found drugs or paraphernalia on approximately a dozen occasions, which she discarded in a trash can,” the court filing states. “She is corroborated by a text message exchange with the defendant, in which she tells the defendant on March 9, 2018, ‘I also

found a few crack pipes. I took them out because our daughter was driving the car.’”

Hallie Biden is described as having observed Hunter Biden “using drugs on multiple occasions.” She said that when Hunter Biden stayed at her home in the fall of 2018, she and her children — Hunter’s niece and nephew — “searched his bags, backpacks, and vehicle in an effort to help him get sober, and discovered drug paraphernalia and drugs in his possessions on multiple occasions.”

Another witness is described as having previously been in a romantic relationship with Hunter Biden and having observed him “using crack cocaine frequently — every 20 minutes except when he slept.” Some of that description fits Lunden Roberts, an Arkansas woman with whom Hunter Biden had a child. An attorney for Roberts did not return a message on Tuesday.

Buhle and Hallie Biden also did not respond to emails seeking comment.

The recent court filing includes 75 pages of texts and emails that government prosecutors say they will use during the case.

But Hunter Biden publicly describes himself as a recovering addict and has not been shy about admitting his drug use.

“I’m a liar and a thief and a blamer and a user and I’m delusional and an addict unlike beyond and above all other addicts that you know and I’ve ruined every relationship I’ve ever cherished,” Hunter Biden wrote in a Nov. 3, 2018 message to Hallie Biden, according to the court filing.

A few weeks later, he conceded that he was struggling to escape his addiction while in his home state, apparently alluding to his long history, memories good and bad, and numerous connections there.

“What’s the worst place for me to be trying to stay clean?” he wrote. “Delaware.”

Perry Stein contributed to this report.

“If Weiss wanted to pressure Biden, he certainly could have shared all of this information with Biden’s attorneys without filing it in a public document.”

Barbara McQuade, University of Michigan law professor

POLITICS & THE NATION

Hurricane season predicted to be especially severe

NOAA forecast stresses a warm ocean is elevating the risk for major storms

BY SCOTT DANCE

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration warned Thursday that the United States could face one of its worst hurricane seasons in two decades as the agency issued its most aggressive outlook ever.

Government meteorologists predicted 17 to 25 tropical storms and said eight to 13 of them are likely to become hurricanes, including four to seven “major” hurricanes.

The forecast underscores how record-hot ocean temperatures have increased the risk of destructive weather.

“This season is looking to be an extraordinary one,” NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad said.

Tropical activity could outpace even a record flurry of storms in 2005, perhaps starting earlier and persisting even longer. That May, warm waters across the tropical Atlantic Ocean prompted warnings of an active hurricane season, but the season exceeded all expectations with a record-smashing 28 storms and seven major hurricanes, including Hurricane Katrina.

Now, tropical Atlantic waters are “dramatically” hotter than they were 19 years ago, NOAA’s lead hurricane season forecaster Matthew Rosencrans said — already as warm as they would be in a typical August. And cyclones are intensifying about three times faster than they did decades ago as they approach the coast, according to new research.

The trends are largely the consequence of an atmospheric blanket of human-emitted greenhouse gases warming the planet. Evidence of the increasing hurricane risk has mounted with each monster storm that analyses show were juiced by global warming.

Adding to storm risks this year

Tropical Atlantic waters are “dramatically” hotter than they were 19 years ago, NOAA lead hurricane season forecaster Matthew Rosencrans said.

is a natural planetary shift known to make conditions more ripe for tropical Atlantic activity, from a fading El Niño climate pattern to La Niña by the heart of hurricane season. A similar shift occurred over the record-setting 2005 hurricane season.

The NOAA forecast aligns with several others from meteorologists who see alarming signs in the tropical Atlantic.

A forecast issued by Colorado State University last month warned of as many as two dozen tropical storms and as many as five major hurricanes, many of which meteorologists said could be long-lived. Britain’s Met Office on Wednesday predicted 22 tropical storms, with potential for as many as a record-tying 28.

Most ominous of all is the forecast from scientists at the University of Pennsylvania, who are calling for a record 33 named storms.

Prime storm conditions

Tropical systems earn a name from rotating annual lists — this year’s goes from Alberto to William — once they develop rapid rotation around a low-pressure center, with sustained winds of at least 39 mph. They become hurricanes once those winds reach at least 74 mph, and are considered major storms when the winds exceed 110 mph.

Hurricane season begins June 1, and by the typical heart of the season in August and September, conditions are forecast to be prime for such systems to intensify.

Given how warm the Atlantic is this spring — with global ocean

surface waters having run a fever of record-setting average heat for more than a year — simple physics suggests it will remain warmer than normal for many months to come. It takes water much longer than land to warm and cool.

Across the tropical Atlantic zone in which storms develop, average surface temperatures are running 1 to 2 degrees Celsius (1.8 to 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above normal, Rosencrans said. Warmer water means more energy for tropical storms to feed off and unleash.

And the expectation of a budding La Niña pattern by late summer or early fall means atmospheric patterns will probably be conducive for storms to organize into tightly spinning systems with defined eyes and violent surrounding winds in what are known as eyewalls.

When La Niña is in place, marked by cooler-than-normal waters across the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, atmospheric circulation patterns tend to reduce what is known as wind shear. When wind shear is low, it means there is relatively little difference in wind speeds and directions at varying altitudes, which helps tropical storms spin up and organize.

“All the ingredients are definitely in place to have an active season,” National Weather Service Director Ken Graham said.

Magnified by climate change

The conditions are expected to magnify the background effect that rising global temperatures are having on tropical cyclones in the Atlantic.

A growing body of research on storms has shown that they are becoming increasingly intense by many measures, a trend punctuated by a period in which seven major hurricanes hit the United States within six years.

Warming is allowing major storms to form significantly earlier during hurricane season, and also encouraging more to undergo rapid intensification more frequently in parts of the Atlantic basin such as the western Caribbean Sea.

A study found that a growing number of tropical cyclones around the world have undergone what researchers called “extreme” rapid intensification, with their maximum sustained winds increasing by 57 mph or more within a 24-hour period.

Some storms in recent years have so stretched the bounds of the five-step Saffir-Simpson scale of hurricane intensity that two prominent meteorologists recently suggested a Category 6 label could be worth considering.

Now, there is evidence that storms are intensifying faster as they near U.S. shores, as well as coastal East Asia, according to a study published this month.

The researchers found that coastal storms’ wind speeds intensified by an average of about 0.4 mph every six hours as they approached the coast from 1979 to 2000. But from 2000 to 2020, that happened more than three times quicker, at a rate of 1.3 mph every six hours.

Along the U.S. coastline, researchers believe that is because of decreasing wind shear and because of increasing relative humidity as land warms faster than oceans.

Karthik Balaguru, a climate and data scientist at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and the study’s lead author, said the trends could translate to heightened coastal dangers this year given how favorable the environment is likely to be for tropical storm development.

“The ones that form could get strong if these conditions persist,” he said.

Even in a quiet season, the most powerful storms can intensify so quickly that communities might have only two days’ warning before a major hurricane hits, Graham said. NOAA and Federal Emergency Management Agency officials urged residents to begin preparing for storms now — considering evacuation routes, medical needs and even pet safety — or else risk being caught off guard or perhaps stuck in heavy traffic on evacuation routes.

“You can’t wait until the storm surfaces because then you may not have the time,” Graham said. “You’ve got to be ready.”



A flame burns at the Shell Deer Park oil refinery in Deer Park, Tex., in 2017. Pemex has owned the refinery, a major benzene emitter, since 2022. Although benzene pollution from refineries fell nationally, four facilities in Gulf Coast states surpassed the EPA limit last year.

Oil refineries’ cancer-causing pollution falls

Federal regulation leads to drop-off in benzene emissions, analysis finds

BY MAXINE JOSELOW

For years, oil refineries across the country have pumped out dangerous levels of benzene, a toxic chemical that can cause leukemia and other blood cancers.

But in a rare example of environmental progress, benzene emissions from nearly all of those refineries have recently plummeted due to strong federal regulations and oversight, according to a new analysis by a watchdog group.

In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency finalized a rule that requires refineries to continually monitor benzene emissions along their property boundaries, or their fence lines. If refineries exceed the EPA’s “action level” of 9 micrograms per cubic meter on an annual average basis, they must find and fix benzene leaks from storage tanks and other infrastructure.

The regulation appears to be working and protecting hundreds of communities near refineries, with the exception of a few areas along the Gulf Coast, according to the Environmental Integrity Project, a watchdog group that analyzed EPA data.

Only six of the 115 refineries in the country had average annual benzene levels exceeding the EPA’s action level last year, according to the analysis. That figure fell from nine at the end of 2022, 11 in 2021 and 12 in 2020, the group found.

“It’s a big improvement, and benzene is especially nasty,” said Eric Schaeffer, executive director of the Environmental Integrity Project and a former senior EPA enforcement official.

Short-term exposure to high concentrations of benzene, a sweet-smelling chemical found in gasoline and other petroleum products, can cause headaches, dizziness and unconsciousness. Long-term exposure has been linked to a higher risk of cancer, especially leukemia and other cancers that affect the blood and bone marrow.

For Schaeffer, whose group has been largely critical of the EPA’s decisions under both Republican and Democratic presidents, the findings offer a rare opportunity to compliment the agency.

“We complain a lot,” he said, laughing. “It’s our job to point out problems that need attention ... but we wanted to recognize a positive trend.”

David Uhlmann, who leads the EPA’s Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, said the federally mandated fence-line monitoring of benzene emissions has been a “game changer.”

“It shines a bright light on facilities that are emitting more benzene than they’re allowed to,” he said in an interview. “And sunshine is the best disinfectant.” Uhlmann, who became the EPA’s top cop in August, said the Biden administration has prioritized reductions in benzene pollution as part of its commitment to environmental justice.

“In the last administration, there was a reluctance by the political leadership to pursue viola-

tions at oil and gas facilities,” he said. “And we’ve corrected for that over the last three years.”

Some refineries have seen consistent year-over-year decreases in benzene levels, the data shows. At HF Sinclair’s Navajo Refinery in Artesia, N.M., the benzene concentration fell from 25.8 micrograms per cubic meter in 2019 to 11.3 in 2020, 8.2 in 2021, 2.3 in 2022, and 2 in 2023.

The decline could curb cancer risks in disadvantaged communities near the refinery. The facility is blocks away from an elementary school and residential neighborhoods, where half of residents live below the poverty line and roughly three-quarters are Latino.

However, the news isn’t all positive along the Gulf Coast, a major hub for oil and gas production. Of the six refineries that surpassed the EPA’s limit last year, four were along the Gulf Coast, with two in Texas and two in Louisiana.

Texas had some of the worst offenders. At TotalEnergies’ Port Arthur Refinery in Port Arthur, Tex., benzene concentrations exceeded the EPA’s action level in every reporting period since monitoring began in January 2019. And at the Pemex Deer Park Refinery east of Houston, benzene pollution has been rising and reached nearly twice the EPA’s limit at the end of last year.

While the overall drop in benzene pollution is encouraging, the data shows that “there is still work to be done, especially in Texas,” said Anthony D’Souza, Texas and policy coordinator at Air Alliance Houston, a nonprofit advocacy group.

“Some of these polluters are so close to residences, schools, parks and churches,” D’Souza added. “For people who live in these areas, it’s a chronic burden.”

Late last year, The Washington Post reported on people living near Gulf Coast refineries that exceeded safe levels of benzene and other pollutants. Some of those residents and environmental advocates criticized the EPA’s Region 6 office, which covers Texas, Louisiana and three adjoining states, as being far too lenient when ensuring that state regulators enforce environmental laws.

Yet even then, the Region 6 office was starting to act. This past fall, the office notified TotalEnergies that the Port Arthur Refinery had violated the Clean Air Act, according to a notice of violation obtained by The Post.

In the notice, EPA officials wrote that TotalEnergies had failed to promptly alert the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality of a benzene leak at the facility in May 2022. The company did not do so until 113 days after the incident and one day after an EPA inspection of the facility, according to the notice.

The EPA also conducted an inspection of the Deer Park Refinery on April 16, said agency spokesman Jeff Landis. The air monitors appeared to be too far from the facility’s fence line, meaning the benzene concentrations may have been even higher than official records suggest, said an EPA staffer involved in the inspection who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly.

TotalEnergies, the French oil giant, and Pemex, the Mexican state-owned petroleum company that



Smoke from an explosion at the TPC Group plant in Port Neches, Tex., in 2019. TPC will pay over \$30 million in fines and penalties.

acquired full ownership of the Deer Park Refinery in 2022, did not respond to requests for comment.

While the 2015 regulations focused on oil refineries, the EPA recently cracked down on toxic pollution from chemical plants. In April, the agency finalized a rule that will require roughly 200 chemical plants to monitor and reduce emissions of benzene, ethylene oxide and other pollutants linked to increased cancer risk.

In addition, the EPA and the Justice Department announced Tuesday that the petrochemical company TPC Group has agreed to pay more than \$30 million in criminal fines and civil penalties

related to 2019 explosions at its facility in Port Neches, Tex. The explosions injured at least three workers, prompted evacuation orders for more than 50,000 people and sent a plume of smoke stretching for miles.

“TPC Group sincerely regrets the damage and disruption caused by the November 2019 incident at our Port Neches facility,” spokeswoman Sara Cronin said in an email. In the more than four years since the explosions, the company has invested millions of dollars in safety initiatives, Cronin said, adding that “we continue to work every day to be a positive part of the communities in which we operate.”

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Uvalde families' lawsuits cite Meta, gunmaker, Call of Duty

UVALDE FROM A1

Ramos. The lawsuits allege Meta and Activision “knowingly exposed the Shooter to the weapon, conditioned him to see it as the solution to his problems, and trained him to use it.”

“Over the last 15 years, two of America’s largest technology companies — Defendants Activision and Meta — have partnered with the firearms industry in a scheme that makes the Joe Camel campaign look laughably harmless, even quaint,” the complaint states.

The lawsuits are part of an intensifying quest for accountability by Uvalde victims’ relatives through the civil courts. Nineteen students and two teachers were killed in the attack, one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history. Law enforcement officers waited 77 minutes to enter the classroom and kill the gunman.

“The truth is that the gun industry and Daniel Defense didn’t act alone. They couldn’t have reached this kid but for Instagram,” attorney Josh Koskoff said of the shooter. “They couldn’t expose him to the dopamine loop of virtually killing a person. That’s what Call of Duty does.”

This week, Koskoff announced his clients had reached a \$2 million insurance payout with the city of Uvalde, which agreed to reforms to improve its police department. The city also agreed to establish May 24 as an annual day of remembrance, make improvements to the local cemetery, work with them on plans for a permanent memorial and offer continued support for children’s mental health.

On Wednesday, Uvalde families filed a new lawsuit against 92 members of the Texas Department of Public Safety, including state troopers and Texas Rangers who responded to the scene. Victims’ families are upset that relatively few officers have lost their jobs, despite the long delay in entering the classroom. The DPS director, Col. Steve McCraw, remains the state’s top cop despite promises to resign if his agency were found to be culpable.

In January, the Justice Department released a damning 575-page catalogue of confusion, lack of courage and their deadly consequences. Attorney General Merrick Garland said that “lives would have been saved” if officers had responded quickly.

The new lawsuits against police, the firearms manufacturer, the online gaming publisher and the social media company attempt to close the accountability gap left open by authorities, attorneys said. Koskoff, the medical-malpractice and personal-injury lawyer who won a \$73 million settlement on behalf of the Newtown, Conn., families in 2022, said Wednesday in Uvalde that his clients are still waiting for answers.

“What is enabling these school shooters or any shooter?” he said. The children “were failed long before the shooting.”

In a statement, Activision expressed sympathy to the families and communities affected by the



Families of the victims of the Robb Elementary School shooting listen to attorney Josh Koskoff during a news conference Wednesday in Uvalde, Tex. The families of the victims are suing nearly 100 state police officers over their response.

“horrendous and heartbreaking” shooting. But they said: “Millions of people around the world enjoy video games without turning to horrific acts.”

Meta and Daniel Defense did not respond to requests for comment.

In the years since the 2012 shooting in Koskoff’s home state of Connecticut, his firm has been working closely with the victims of mass shootings across the country. In the case against Remington, the then-manufacturer of the Bushmaster rifle used in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, Koskoff’s team managed to find a loophole around the federal immunity law shielding the gun industry from most tort litigation.

Only one other industry — online platforms such as Facebook’s parent company — enjoys the same kind of legal protection from liability that firearms manufacturers lobbied for and won from Congress in 2005.

Koskoff’s challenge was expected to fail. But he argued that the gunmaker violated a state statute, specifically consumer protection laws outlawing unscrupulous marketing. The state Supreme Court allowed the case to move forward, granting Koskoff that most precious of gifts to an attorney: discovery.

Internal documents and communications demonstrated the questionable tactics the company, which was in bankruptcy at the time, used to sell its firearms.

“The families refused to settle and wanted to release the discovery results they achieved,” Georgetown University law professor Heidi Li Feldman said. “That’s the power of discovery, to open up all these companies to more litigation. When product manufacturers are involved in

shady marketing practices, they fear the spotlight.”

Before it could go further, the insurers settled. The case provided a road map for future civil litigation, some experts said.

“I think it opened a lot of eyes that maybe PLCAA [the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act] wasn’t the brick wall we all thought it was,” said Adam Skaggs, vice president and chief counsel of the Giffords Law Center, which fights for laws to end gun violence. “Clearly, it’s not impossible and that kind of changed the game.”

Several state legislatures, including California and Hawaii,

out mass shooters,” the lawsuit states.

Research shows that there is some correlation between playing violent video games and exhibiting more aggressive behaviors, but there is little evidence that the games lead to violent crime such as mass shootings, said David Dupee, a chief psychiatry resident at Stanford Health.

“The evidence definitely supports guns being the issue far more ... than it does to violent video games,” said Dupee, who researched the topic while working for Stanford’s Brainstorm Lab. “We’re not the only society that has a large utilization of

“Daniel Defense’s marketing strategy is to be the company where adolescents get their first gun at 18,” Koskoff said.

The lawsuit alleges that Meta, which owns Instagram, easily allows gun manufacturers like Daniel Defense to circumvent its ban on paid firearm advertisements to reach scores of young people. Under Meta’s rules, gunmakers are not allowed to buy advertisements promoting the sale of or use of weapons, ammunition or explosives. But gunmakers are free to post promotional material about weapons from their own account pages on Facebook and Instagram — a freedom the lawsuit alleges Daniel Defense often exploited.

According to the complaint, the Robb school shooter downloaded a version of “Call of Duty: Modern Warfare” in November 2021 that featured on the opening title page the DDM4V7 model rifle Ramos would later purchase. Drawing from the shooter’s social media accounts, Koskoff argued he was being bombarded with explicit marketing and combat imagery from the company on Instagram.

The lawsuit cites an image Daniel Defense posted on Instagram of soldiers on patrol, with no animal in sight, and a caption that reads: “Hunters Hunt.” In another post, Daniel Defense shared an image of one of its rifles sporting a configuration it said was “totally murdered out,” according to the lawsuit. Daniel Defense still runs its accounts on Instagram and Facebook, where the company continues to routinely post images of its guns.

Such leniency is part of a broader pattern by Meta to treat firearm sellers with a light touch, the lawsuit alleges.

The complaint cites Meta’s

“[Daniel Defense] couldn’t have reached this kid but for Instagram. They couldn’t expose him to the dopamine loop of virtually killing a person. That’s what Call of Duty does.”

Josh Koskoff, attorney for Uvalde parents

passed consumer safety laws specific to the sale and marketing of firearms that would open the industry to more civil liability. Texas is not one of them. But it’s just one vein in the three-pronged legal push by Uvalde families.

The lawsuit against Activision and Meta, which is being filed in California, accuses the tech companies of knowingly promoting dangerous weapons to millions of vulnerable young people, particularly young men who are “insecure about their masculinity, often bullied, eager to show strength and assert dominance.”

“To put a finer point on it: Defendants are chewing up alienated teenage boys and spitting

violent video games, but we are the main modern society that has ready access to firearms.”

In the filings, Koskoff laid out what is perhaps the most detailed narrative yet of the forces that may have shaped Ramos’s decision to buy the powerful rifle he used to slaughter children on May 24, 2022.

The families allege in court that while Ramos was still 17, he put the gun in an online shopping cart. The lawyers contend that when he didn’t immediately proceed in purchasing the AR-15-style rifle, Daniel Defense saw it as an opportunity, emailing Ramos a targeted offer and telling him the weapon was “ready” for him.

Trump suggests ex-rival Haley will be a part of his team ‘in some form’

BY VICTORIA BISSET

Former president Donald Trump suggested that Nikki Haley would have a place on his team “in some form” — in what appeared to be his first public response to his former Republican presidential rival’s announcement that she will vote for him.

Trump, in an interview with News 12 New York after a Bronx campaign rally Thursday, was asked about the recent comments from Haley, who was U.N. ambassador under Trump, and whether there would be room for her on his team or even his ticket.

“Well, I think she’s going to be on our team because we have a lot of the same ideas, the same thoughts — I appreciated what she said,” Trump responded.

“You know we had a nasty campaign, it was pretty nasty,” he continued. “But she’s a very capable person, and I’m sure she’s going to be on our team in some form, absolutely.”

Haley’s team could not immediately be reached for comment early Friday.

Earlier this week, in Haley’s first public appearance since suspending her 2024 campaign, Haley said Trump should not take her supporters’ votes for granted.

“I will be voting for Trump. Having said that, I stand by what



Nikki Haley makes a campaign stop at the Keene Country Club on Jan. 20 in Keene, N.H. Haley, who dropped out of the Republican contest in early March, announced she would vote for Donald Trump, but that he shouldn’t take her supporters’ votes for granted.

I said in my suspension speech,” she said Wednesday. “Trump would be smart to reach out to the millions of people who voted

for me and continue to support me and not assume that they’re just going to be with him. And I genuinely hope he does.”

Trump “has not been perfect” on many key issues, she said, but President Biden “has been a catastrophe.”

Haley, who had been the only woman in the GOP contest and Trump’s final major rival for the Republican nomination, with-

drawn in early March, but stopped short of endorsing the former president.

Trump launched racially charged attacks against Haley as they faced off in the Republican primaries and mocked her husband, a member of the military who was deployed overseas.

Haley questioned Trump’s mental fitness — and whether he was fit for office. In February, she said in an NBC interview that Trump “is not the same person he was in 2016” — calling him “unhinged” and “more diminished.”

Haley’s campaign suspension cleared the way for Trump to become the presumptive Republican nominee against Biden.

Trump, in the same interview Thursday, was also asked to share his top three contenders for running mate.

“Well we have so many, I don’t want to do that,” he said, before citing retired neurosurgeon and former Housing and Urban Development secretary Ben Carson, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Sen. J.D. Vance (R-Ohio), and saying that the House Republican Conference chair, Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), “is doing a fantastic job.”

“But I could go on for quite a long time,” Trump said, adding that a decision would probably come during the Republican National Convention, which takes place in Milwaukee in July.

Meta’s penalties for firearm sales were more lenient than for users who posted child pornography, which is illegal, or terrorism imagery, which prompts immediate removal from the platform.

Meta has over the years also come under criticism for allowing the sale of guns directly on its platform. After the 2012 Sandy Hook shooting, a coalition of activist groups, including the parents of the slain students, pushed Meta, then called Facebook, to limit sales of gun on its platform. Then-New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman later alleged the company was allowing people to evade laws requiring a background check in many states. By 2016, the company had banned peer-to-peer firearm sales as well as the sale of ammunition and parts.

Since then, media outlets have routinely found that sellers can easily evade those bans in dedicated Facebook groups or on Facebook Marketplace, the company’s classified services.

Much of the new Uvalde lawsuit against Meta echoes some of the complaints by dozens of state attorneys general and school districts that have accused the tech giant of using manipulative practices to hook children on its platforms while exposing them to harmful content.

The Uvalde families are likely to encounter significant hurdles in each of the new lawsuits they are filing. Their legal strategy revolves around a Texas statute that makes it illegal to offer to sell a firearm to a minor. But the state vigorously defends its state law enforcers and gunmakers.

The legal team’s past victory bears little resemblance to the fight ahead of it, said UCLA law professor Adam Winkler, a Second Amendment expert. Remington is not Daniel Defense, which has no incentive to back down or settle, lest it face boycotts from the rest of the industry, he said.

“You’re talking about one of the ideological stalwarts of the gun rights movement,” Winkler said. “They are a small outfit but they played a leading role.”

But the families may have new reason for optimism in their cases against Meta and Activision. A New York judge has allowed a case brought by families affected by the Tops supermarket shooting in Buffalo, to hold several social media companies’ algorithms responsible for radicalizing the shooter, to move forward toward discovery.

“Whatever advantages the gun industry has through the federal immunity law, it’s not a blanket get-out-of-jail-free card,” Winkler said. “When companies make decisions to market particularly dangerous products or use marketing tactics that encourage particularly troubled young men to commit heinous acts, the victims of those heinous acts have the opportunity to try to hold them accountable.”

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Locals frustrated by silt flow into river

RIVER FROM A1

town villains.

"The Maury is a mighty river that is being held back and spoiled for generations to come and only done so to benefit one group of summer visitors," one letter to the Lexington News-Gazette read in August. "The Scouting organization is failing citizens," another said earlier this year.

Matthew Keck, director of support services for the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts, said in an interview that the Scouts are doing everything they can to maintain their property and care for the environment.

"We're looking to model what it is we teach young people, right?" Keck said, then recited what's known as Scout Law: "A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. We don't just say those words to open a meeting, we live by them. We are always trying to be good Scouts."

The Scouts, he said, are stuck in a Catch-22: If the dam that created their lake were to fail, it could destroy the lives and property of thousands of people downstream. But maintaining it requires periodically lowering the lake, which harms the water quality of the river.

"It's a tough thing all the way around," said Rockbridge County administrator Spencer Suter, who has lived in the county nearly 30 years and is trying to work with both sides of the contentious issue. "From my perspective, from the county perspective, we just want the Maury to be the Maury. ... [But] there's a lot of moving parts."

From just below the Goshen Scout Reservation, the Maury flows 43 miles through the mountains of Rockbridge County and the city of Lexington before emptying into the James River. It's Virginia's only river that starts and ends within a single county.

"Call it a spine. Call it a life-blood flow," Kosovic said.

Shawnee and Cherokee people lived along the waterway before European settlers made it the western frontier. Before the Civil War, small pig-iron foundries dotted the mountains and shipped their goods on flat-bottomed bateaux along a canal that bypassed the river's many rocky falls. Giant stone locks, abandoned when the railroad arrived, loom now like castle ruins beside the popular Ben Salem swimming hole.

The Maury tumbles out of the Allegheny Mountains through the Goshen Pass, a gap that looks like interlocking puzzle pieces and produces what the conservation group American Whitewater calls "probably the most 'Classic' of Virginia's white water streams."

In 1954, Virginia made the Goshen Pass Natural Area Preserve the state's first wildlife management area. Its chestnut oak forests shelter the Appalachian jewelwing, a rare damselfly, along with bears, bobcats, water snakes and bald eagles. The state stocks the river with trout. Recently, the General Assembly named the Maury a "state scenic river."

"That designation is a tourist attraction point, but apparently it has no teeth in terms of stopping the Scouts from doing this," said Sam Calhoun, a retired law professor at Washington and Lee University in Lexington who owns a cottage on the Maury. "Obviously, there's an irony there."

Drawn to the wild beauty just three hours southwest of D.C., the National Capital Area Council of the Scouts bought about 4,000 acres in the Goshen area in 1960 and created a District-flavored outpost. The 444-acre lake, formed in 1966 by damming a Maury tributary called the Little Calfpasture, is named Lake Merriweather for Scout donor and D.C. philanthropist Marjorie Merriweather Post. One of the reservation's five camps is named after the Bethesda-based Marriott Corp., another donor. The road that rings the reservation is Beltway Drive.

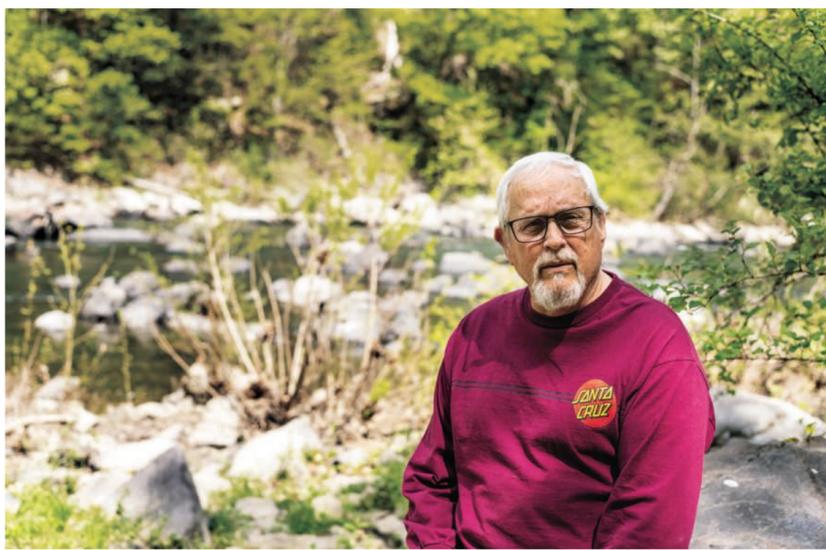
Every summer, the camps host wilderness and merit badge programs for thousands of Scouts from the council's membership area, which includes the District, suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, Fredericksburg and — through a council merger — the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"We have weekly programs of aquatics activities, ecology training, team building, climbing activities," Keck said. "The lake — it is the central feature, both for program delivery and for the landscape. It's the space between the campsites, which makes it feel



JUSTIN IDE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Maury River as it comes through Goshen Pass. The group American Whitewater calls this part of the river "probably the most 'Classic' of Virginia's whitewater streams."



JUSTIN IDE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

George Kosovic, a Rockbridge County resident and member of the Maury River Alliance, a group that residents have formed to fight back against what they see as damage to a precious local resource.



JUSTIN IDE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The entrance to the campground of the National Capital Area Council of the Scouts. The camp is home to Lake Merriweather, named for Scout donor and D.C. philanthropist Marjorie Merriweather Post.

more personal."

From May through the beginning of August, about 200 Scout staffers operate the reservation. The rest of the year, only two people are there full time.

The lake is less than a mile above the spot where the Little Calfpasture and the Calfpasture converge to form the Maury. In 1985, a storm caused catastrophic floods that wiped out a section of Route 39 along the river that took a year to rebuild. But the current spate of problems dates to 1992, according to a timeline provided by the state Department of Environmental Quality.

That year, a fish kill on the short stretch of the Little Calfpasture below the lake was attributed to the Scouts' releasing water through a drain at the bottom of the dam, sending a massive slug of sediment downstream. The state issued a notice of violation and required the Scouts to make changes to the dam and its management.

The Little Calfpasture was still "severely impaired" several years later, so the state ordered the Scouts to keep the lake full except during times of emergency. In 2004, the Scouts started lowering the lake again every fall; the state

stepped in and told them to stop. Back and forth it went, with varying levels of compliance, until 2014, when the state decided the Little Calfpasture was gradually improving and lifted its sanctions.

Later that same year, county conservation officers began complaining that the problems had started again. But because the sanctions were lifted, the state had no authority to enforce change. Every fall, the Scouts would drain the lake and sediment would flow into the Maury. By 2023, a study by a scientist at James Madison University found that the Little Calfpasture is so choked with silt that little can live there, placing it in the bottom 15 percent of waterways statewide — worse than some urban streams.

Residents say the silt also degrades the Maury over time. John Pancake, 76, spent his whole life visiting the spot in the Goshen Pass where his home now stands. What used to be a clean stretch of boulders and water, charted by his grandmother 100 years ago, is now narrowed by earth and vegetation, with sycamores growing to the water's edge.

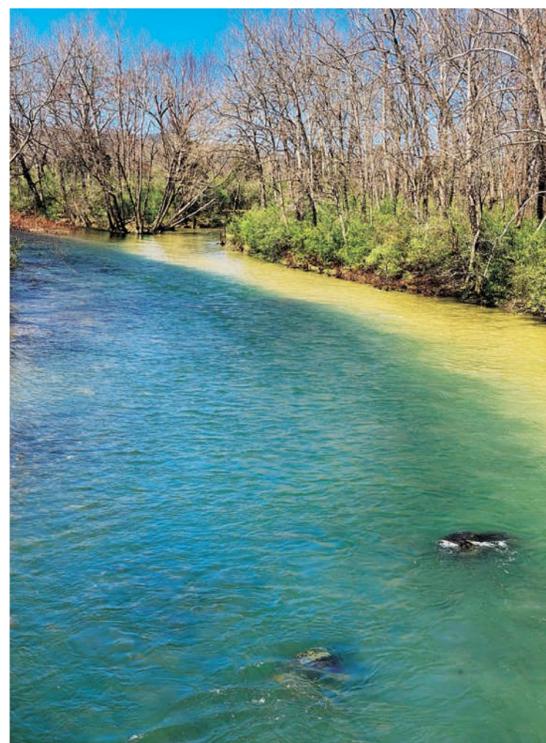
The murkiness is often visible through the city of Lexington and

miles beyond, residents say. But because that's usually during the winter months, it has less direct impact on Maury life. That changed last year, when the early drawdown caught everyone off guard.

Keck said the Scouts drained the lake in August to prepare for dredging under a federal grant. But once the lake was down and mud flats exposed, the Scouts couldn't get approval from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to dump the dredging spoils because the designated deposit area was home to an endangered bat, he said. So the mud flat sat for weeks, washing into the Maury.

Like any dammed body of water, the lake traps sediment — from fine silt to "tires or cows or trees. At some point we have to clean all of that out," Keck said. That's the primary reason they lower the lake every year. In addition, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which oversees dam safety, wants the Scouts to ensure that an emergency gate at the base of the dam is operable so water can be released in a storm or flood.

The dam is 38 feet high and mostly earthen, with a concrete channel in the center featuring 10



JOHN PANCAKE

Sediment coming into the Maury from the Little Calfpasture, the tributary that was dammed to create the lake the Boy Scouts use.

gates that can be opened or closed, plus the emergency gate below like the drain in a bathtub. Maintaining the emergency gate means opening it every year, which releases fine silt downstream, Keck said.

In a statement to The Washington Post, a spokesman for the DCR said the "gate tests are brief and will not lead to any significant drawdown of a reservoir."

The state's Department of Environmental Quality would like that gate kept closed at all times and the lake to remain full. "All the data show that if it's kept at full pool you see much less sediment downstream. That's best for the river. But if you have to draw it down, minimize the time and depth," said Neshia McRae of the department's Valley Regional Office in Harrisonburg, who has spent years working on the river.

But the state's authority to enforce water quality is limited. Unlike the fish kill of 1992, there is no single catastrophic event to penalize. And because the sediment coming into the lake is considered "non point source," or originating from a general environment instead of a single polluter, the best the state can do is order a "total maximum daily load" report, or a voluntary action plan to reduce overall runoff.

Such a plan went into effect in 2017. Suter, the county administrator, has been trying to help coordinate efforts to meet its goals. Federal grants have helped farmers fence grazing lands upstream on the Calfpasture, reducing runoff. Cadets from Virginia Military Institute in Lexington cleared out a ravine that had been used as an unofficial trash dump.

On the Scout reservation, though, little has changed.

"We're at the phase where we're trying to understand, would larger-scale dredging help us to manage the silt and sediment that's in the lake over time?" said Keck, an Eagle Scout from McLean who grew up going to camp at Goshen. Residents say they're frustra-

ed and don't understand what the Scouts have in mind. Last month, at least 150 people turned up for an informational meeting with the Maury River Alliance at a local fire station. Members had hoped state lawmakers would attend, but all had to be in Richmond for a General Assembly session. Residents vowed to keep pressure on the state to broker some kind of deal so the lake can be managed in a way that minimizes harm to the Maury and keeps locals informed.

McClung, a former librarian who has written books about Rockbridge County and the Goshen Pass, said she and others feel strongly because the river is woven into their lives. "Many children have been conceived on this river," she said. Babies are baptized there. Weddings take place on the banks. Families scatter the ashes of loved ones.

Pancake, who retired in 2008 as the arts editor of The Post, has written about the river's role through five generations of his family's history. On his wall are photos from across the years — Pancake as a child in 1955 with his father in the river; at the same spot in 1980 with his daughter, Bess; and Bess in 2015 with her young daughter.

Now, as another summer approaches, Lake Merriweather is nearly full and the Scouts were preparing for family camping events on Memorial Day weekend. And on a recent visit to a suspended footbridge just below the confluence of the Maury, the lingering effects of lake runoff are still visible.

The Little Calfpasture on the right comes in brownish and cloudy; the Calfpasture on the left is clear; and the Maury looks like two rivers zipped together.

"People are really galvanized, more in the last six months than I've seen in 20 years I've been working on this," said Sandra Stuart, 84, a former court reporter who trained herself to monitor the Maury's water quality. "We like it here. We want our river."

For-profit firms are raking in millions

VETERANS FROM A1

Despite a federal law that prohibits charging veterans for help in applying for compensation for wartime injuries, as many as 100 unaccredited, for-profit companies now are making hundreds of millions of dollars, a Washington Post review found. The overwhelmed veterans agency says the government is all but powerless to stop the practice, particularly since Congress years ago stripped criminal penalties from the law. And now a cadre of mostly Republican lawmakers is pushing to do away with the restrictions altogether, a plan bankrolled by a well-funded industry group led by a former high-ranking Trump administration VA official.

Interviews with current and former employees, VA officials and court documents reveal a booming industry that charges veterans anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000 for help filing disability claims that by law should be free. Many former service members are enticed by aggressive online and TV sales pitches from the largely veteran-led groups that promise a success rate of up to 90 percent in boosting benefits.

"It looks like they're throwing you a lifeline when they're just taking advantage of you," said Miranda Powell, 28, a Navy veteran from Topeka, Kan., who paid a claims company \$8,000 for helping her win an increase to her disability rating.

The industry says it's simply educating veterans about how to negotiate a long-troubled VA benefits system and that its services are fully legal since clients ultimately submit their own claims. While government lawyers have sent them numerous notices to cease and desist, the companies argue that the law doesn't expressly forbid their services.

"VA Claims Insider is an education company. Period," spokesman Jeff Eller said of one of the industry's founding companies. Seeking accreditation from VA "would be like a doctor pursuing a law degree or a plumber deciding to get HVAC certified — it doesn't make any sense."

Free services provided by Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, state and local veterans agencies and other accredited, nonprofit groups have failed to keep up with VA's cumbersome bureaucracy, the companies say. Industry leaders say that veterans should have a choice to pay for help and don't get charged if they don't win compensation.

Jim Hill II, co-founder and chief executive officer for Gainesville, Fla.-based Trajector Medical, which specializes in preparing medical evidence for claims, said the vast majority of his company's clients have already tried and failed to secure benefits with the help of free groups. "The veterans service organizations have already taken a crack and lost." His and other firms declined to provide data to support their assertion that they get better results than accredited groups.

But some current and former employees of the firms say they make unrealistic promises and embrace tactics that can put veterans' claims at risk. Many companies devote minimal time to individual cases, former clients and employees say.

"These companies are incredibly savvy," said Maureen Elias, a senior benefits official at VA and co-chair of a task force the White House created in December to protect veterans from scams. Veterans "infer that somehow filing through them is going to be more beneficial to them than filing through VA, but they're misinforming people."

Experts on veterans benefits say the companies are violating the law by assisting veterans with their claims and taking advantage of VA's lack of enforcement.

"Each company does it a little differently, but it's not just giving consulting services. They're helping them get medical evidence to help with the claim," said Yelena Duterte, director of the veterans legal clinic at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law.

With little federal action on the horizon, state legislatures in New York, New Jersey and Maine have banned or restricted for-profit claims companies, and similar bills are pending in at least five other states, prompted by the VFW, which is waging a public battle against the industry. Several law firms representing veterans and accredited claims agents, along with the Texas attorney



SIMON KLINGERT/AP

Burn pits like this one in April 2011 at Forward Operating Base Caferetta Nawzad south of Kabul are believed to have led to illnesses among many U.S. veterans. Congress passed the Pact Act in August 2022 to compensate those with toxic exposures.

general, are suing companies for a range of allegedly predatory practices. The VA inspector general's office also has opened criminal investigations into several firms, officials said, aiming to find a legal way around the agency's lack of prosecutorial power.

Caught in the middle are millions of veterans who want the benefits they're owed under existing law. Powell, now a student activist for veterans at George Washington University, says she is gathering medical evidence to file a claim under the Pact Act for exposure to burn pits off the African coast that may have contributed to two surgeries for polycystic ovary syndrome, a hormonal condition.

Veterans, Inc.

This story is part of a series examining an unprecedented increase in veterans benefits in recent years.

But Powell says this time she will get free help from an accredited agent with the VFW.

"Looking back on it I feel dumb," she said of her experience paying a company, which she declined to name for fear she will be harassed. "They wanted a cut of everything I got. I don't want to hold onto that shame."

A rushed rollout

For decades, the military burned waste on many U.S. bases in combat zones abroad, lighting the refuse on fire with jet fuel.

Veterans and their advocates have long pushed the government to recognize links between cancers, bronchial ailments and other illnesses suffered by service members returning from the Gulf War and post-Sept. 11 conflicts

and toxic smoke they were exposed to from the burn pits. VA leaders cited a lack of conclusive evidence and staggering costs of care.

But in August 2022, the Pact Act passed the Senate 86-11, after sailing through the House and drawing support from President Biden and comedian and activist Jon Stewart. The law, which recognized 370 conditions linked to toxins dating to the Vietnam era, became the largest expansion of veterans benefits since VA allowed claims for illnesses stemming from Agent Orange in 1991.

The new benefits came amid a larger cultural shift at VA, which for years had faced congressional pressure over long delays and high rejection rates for disability compensation. Under Denis McDonough, who became secretary in 2021, the agency has prioritized greenlighting claims and aggressively pushed veterans to seek benefits. It's worked: Veterans and survivors filed a record 2.3 million overall claims in fiscal 2023, an increase of 41 percent over 2022, budget data shows.

Since the late 1950s, VA has accredited nonprofit service organizations like the VFW to help veterans apply for benefits. Their services, by law, must be free for initial claims. Many veterans also submit claims on their own.

VA leaders decided in fall 2022 to roll out the new program in four months instead of over multiple years as planned to serve more veterans and speed up benefits delivery. Claims flooded in. As of Tuesday, VA had approved 1 million veterans and survivors for \$5.1 billion in disability payments related to toxic exposures and offered free health care to millions of others under the law.

The ambitious timeline led to speed bumps, though.

The Veterans Benefits Administration, with a record \$197 bil-

lion budget, brought on 11,300 new employees to process not just toxic exposure claims but also a growth in other disability benefit requests. But training for the new hires fell short, officials acknowledged to lawmakers. The staff was required to work mandatory overtime most months.

The expanding claims led to mistakes, the inspector general's office found, and the training manual for how to handle newly covered toxic exposures has been revised multiple times, prompting delays and inaccurate decisions, according to union officials.

"People are still learning this," said David Bump, a quality review specialist in the benefits system and an official with the American Federation of Government Employees, a union representing VA employees. "They waited too long to roll out any training, and it was basic."

These flaws, along with an outdated processing system relying on manual work, have contributed to a claims backlog that stood at more than 307,000 cases in April. Officials said they are working to improve training and streamline processing.

Still, many veterans who have sought Pact Act benefits and other disability compensation have encountered months of waits and a bureaucracy that can seem impenetrable, creating an opening for claims companies.

"You have a system right now that's very uneven, and a chokehold around VA to process claims," said Clayton Simms, a former Marine whose YouTube channel, The CivDiv, teaches veterans about the disability process. "It's what makes many veterans disgruntled."

An unaccredited industry flourishes

When Bill Taylor was prepar-

ing to retire from the Army a decade ago after deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans, he said he was stunned by the lack of support he found at Fort Bragg, N.C., for departing soldiers wanting to file for disability benefits.

"We quickly saw what was there was a gaping need," he said, a claim that Fort Bragg officials deny.

So in 2018 he co-founded Veterans Guardian — a for-profit company pitching a promise to improve a veteran's likelihood of securing disability benefits. Since then, dozens of other companies have emerged with similar promises. Of 18 million veterans in the United States, 6 million receive disability compensation, the pitch goes — and "70 to 80 percent of that population is under-rated," Taylor said, meaning these veterans have more severe health ailments than they are receiving compensation for.

But there is a cost: Clients sign contracts that bind them to pay a one-time sum equal to five times their new monthly disability payment or increase, the industry standard. Others go higher; VA Claims Insider, one of the largest firms, charges a fee six times the new payment or increase. The higher the rating, the more profit for the company.

In ads, the companies suggest that veterans prioritize the easiest claims. In a recent YouTube video, VA Claims Insider founder Brian Reese shares the top health conditions that regularly qualify for the biggest disability compensation payments, from post-traumatic stress disorder to chronic fatigue and asthma.

Many clients agree to hand over Social Security numbers and passwords to access VA's benefits portal, former clients and employees say, so that the veteran technically "submits" the claim, while the company often actually

fills out the paperwork.

The unaccredited industry flourished during the coronavirus pandemic, when many accredited veterans groups, which rely on bricks-and-mortar operations, closed their doors.

Then came the Pact Act, which became a perfect sales pitch. Veterans Guardian had 20,000 clients in 2023; it's on target to serve 40,000 veterans this year, he said. VA Claims Insider's monthly advertising expenses ran as high as \$300,000, said one former executive, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the firm's private data. Its first crop of coaches took home millions of dollars a month in commissions, according to three former employees. Eller, the company spokesman, declined to comment on the commissions.

Business was so good at Trajector, with more than 1,000 employees and 50,000 clients projected this year, that the company told the Securities and Exchange Commission in late 2021 that it planned to go public. The filing showed \$127 million in revenue in the previous 18 months.

The companies say their strategy is no different from the attorneys accredited by VA to appeal when a claim is denied, who are allowed to collect some of a veteran's back pay if the appeal is successful. These lawyers have incentive to delay cases to take a larger share, said Taylor and others in the for-profit industry.

The association that represents accredited lawyers, though, says the fees they're legally permitted to charge are significantly lower than what claims companies take. Diane Boyd Rauber, executive director of the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates, said Congress allows attorneys to charge for appeals because "the choices a veteran faces become much more complex" than for an initial claim.

VA officials have also told Congress that they conduct rigorous due diligence with the claims agents they accredit. In the past three years, the agency has removed or suspended the accreditation of nearly 15,000 attorneys, claims agents and veterans service groups representatives.

Companies that specialize solely in gathering medical evidence for veterans, like Trajector, also argue that the law doesn't specifically forbid charging veterans to produce such documentation.

Others in the industry say it represents an existential threat to the VFW and other groups, whose membership decline has thinned resources. "You have to ask yourself, what's their motive for pointing the finger at us?" Hill said. He accused veterans groups of "actively mobilizing their members to disparage us" by filing complaints about Trajector's service with the Better Business Bureau.

Some veterans say they got exactly what they signed up for.

"They did more for me in six months than I did in 18 years," said John Gray, a Gulf War veteran from Temple Hills, Md., who paid Trajector \$5,000 and then saw his disability rating boosted to 90 percent from 30 percent for a back injury in the Army and other issues. Gray said he had

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

Miranda Powell, 28, at her home in Rosslyn, Va. Powell was a Navy corpsman who paid a for-profit company \$8,000 to help her increase her disability benefits after she left the military. She says the firm took advantage of her and used predatory tactics.

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

previously worked with one of the major accredited veterans service organizations years earlier to file a claim, but “it was like they didn’t have the proper skill set.”

He said he is now working with Trajector on a claim under the Pact Act for persistent gastrointestinal issues and referring fellow veterans to the company. “I was fighting VA for years,” he said.

William Mason of Key West, Fla., a coach with Veterans Guardian from 2019 to 2022, said the company is clear with veterans up front that “you can do this for free,” including with a veterans service organization. But, he said of those groups: “God bless them, you kind of get what you paid for.”

False promises

At times, though, the for-profit claims industry did not live up to its promises, with disastrous consequences for some veterans, according to interviews, lawsuits and communications between veterans and the companies.

Former employees of the unaccredited industry say it prioritizes profits and volume over helping veterans.

“I was charging veterans \$20,000 who I potentially spent 45 minutes on the phone with,” said a former coach at VA Claims Insider who quit last spring because he felt the job had become unethical. He spoke on the condition of anonymity out of concern he could face retribution from the firm, which he called a “veteran mill,” with most contacts handled by a contract employee in the Philippines.

“It was sales in a sense, and that’s where it got sketchy,” said Christopher Borum of Gilbert, Ariz., who worked as a coach for Veterans Guardian for almost three years. “If the companies are doing well, things get overlooked.”

Other former employees said the companies often have an incentive to stretch the truth as they prepare claims, and some recalled veterans being pushed to give the most aggressive possible descriptions of their symptoms to medical professionals to secure larger disability checks.

“It was a cut-and-paste system,” a former manager at VA Claims Insider said of the medical letters, which can cost up to an extra \$1,500 across the industry. Veterans are steered toward filing claims for mental health ailments, for which VA tends to award generous ratings.

Veterans’ groups say those practices are damaging to the full benefits system. “When a company comes along that promotes fudging the numbers, it erodes public confidence in the system,” said Ryan Gallucci, the VFW’s executive director.

VA Claims Insider also refers veterans to an affiliated entity operated by the wife of its founder that promises to establish links between their health conditions and military service — for an



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

Comedian and activist Jon Stewart hugs Rosie Torres, wife of veteran Le Roy Torres, as they celebrate Senate passage in August 2022 of the Pact Act, legislation to compensate veterans for toxic exposures.

additional fee. Some former employees say they believe the arrangement is a potential conflict of interest because clients are steered to see its doctors.

Eller, the VA Claims Insider spokesman, called the medical company, Telemedica, a “separate administrative services company” that is part of a “preferred provider network” and said that Brian Reese, VA Claims Insider’s founder, “has never received a penny” for referring clients there. A veteran “can use any service” to obtain a letter and medical exam, Eller said.

Other companies with similar business models have proliferated. They use medical groups specifically established to examine veterans before they submit a claim for disability benefits. The physicals often are cursory and limited to medical record reviews, with no face-to-face exam, former employees say, and can jeopardize legitimate claims by casting suspicions on outside medical letters, critics say. An audit released by the inspector general’s office in January found a “significant” risk of fraud from the questionnaires that veterans submit from private medical providers, with nearly 70 percent of those that it reviewed containing one or more fraud risk indicators.

VA leaders say the claims processing staff has virtually no way to know if a veteran is coached as the industry grows more savvy at removing traces of its involvement in preparing claims.

Veterans also said some companies harassed them for payment, even when they settled

their bills and decided to file claims on their own.

“They’re stealing money out of veterans’ mouths, but what they’re doing is negligible,” Abigayle Patterson, a former Army captain who worked as an emergency room nurse in Baghdad’s Green Zone during the Iraq War, said of her experience with Veterans Guardian. Now living in El Paso and working as a disability examiner for a VA contractor,

eralizations and hypotheticals” but said that “based on the example provided it looks like the issue was resolved promptly.”

Other veterans have used the VA’s complaints as the basis to sue for-profit companies. Grant Gallagher, an Air Force veteran from San Antonio, was billed \$7,426.00 by Maryland-based Just4Veterans last year after the company helped boost his 90 percent disability rating to 100

“It looks like they’re throwing you a lifeline when they’re just taking advantage of you.”

Miranda Powell, 28, a Navy veteran from Topeka, Kan., who paid a claims company \$8,000 for helping her win an increase to her disability rating

Patterson said the company helped boost her monthly disability check by \$619.00 for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury in exchange for a \$3,000 fee.

But when Patterson reapplied to VA on her own and won another step-up for chronic sinusitis, Veterans Guardian sent her an invoice for both increases, she said. “I put my foot down and told them, ‘I’m not paying you for what I did myself.’” She is now suing Veterans Guardian for several practices she says were predatory.

Spokesman Michael Bova said in an email that the company “cannot comment on broad gen-

eralizations and hypotheticals” but said that “based on the example provided it looks like the issue was resolved promptly.”

Other veterans have used the VA’s complaints as the basis to sue for-profit companies. Grant Gallagher, an Air Force veteran from San Antonio, was billed \$7,426.00 by Maryland-based Just4Veterans last year after the company helped boost his 90 percent disability rating to 100

percent, according to records provided by Gallagher. He sued the firm, alleging it charged “excessive” fees while not being accredited by VA and used deceptive trade practices. In court filings, the firm says Gallagher breached his contract by failing to pay the full fee. Just4Vets and its attorney did not respond to requests for comment from The Post.

Handcuffed agencies

As the industry has grown, scrutiny and complaints have spread — to the Better Business Bureau, the Texas attorney general, the Federal Trade Commission, state lawmakers and VA’s

general counsel’s office. The complaints allege a range of predatory practices, including harassment, threats over money veterans did not owe, and misleading ads.

But even in clear cases of abuse, VA officials said there is little they can do, thanks in part to a decision by Congress in 2006 to remove criminal charges from the law forbidding entities from charging veterans for claims help. It’s unclear what prompted the little-noticed change, which is not mentioned in the transcript of the Senate’s committee report. But it has come to haunt the agency.

“The unintended consequence is, these folks do what they want,” Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, said of the for-profit claims companies.

VA says it has now opened investigations into almost 40 unaccredited companies since the fiscal year that began in October 2022, and issued letters to about two dozen — including Veterans Guardian, VA Claims Insider and Trajector, directing them to “immediately cease any and all illegal activities.”

“Our message to every Veteran and survivor is this: you don’t have to pay anyone to file a benefits claim,” Josh Jacobs, the undersecretary for benefits, said in a statement.

The industry responded by maintaining that it was providing guidance to veterans and not “helping” with claims. The reality was that the letters had no legal teeth.

In December, following a Texas

Tribune story, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) sued VA Claims Insider, seeking damages and an injunction that would prevent the firm from operating in the veteran-rich state. The firm said it is fighting the lawsuit.

Lawmakers in April 2023 introduced a bipartisan bill with backing from 44 state attorneys general to restore the Justice Department’s authority to seek criminal charges against the firms. VA lawyers have said it would deter bad actors, regardless of what state they operate in.

But the industry mobilized quickly. Investing heavily in Washington lobbyists and campaign contributions — Veterans Guardian spent \$804,000 on lobbying last year, public records show — the industry’s biggest players won over a majority of GOP lawmakers on the House and Senate committees that oversee veterans’ affairs. The measure has not yet come up for a vote.

Veterans Guardian also sued New Jersey in November, alleging that the state’s law violates the First Amendment and puts veterans’ benefits at risk.

Late last year, the claims industry formed its first trade association, the National Association for Veteran Rights. Led by Peter O’Rourke, acting VA secretary during the Trump administration, the group is funded by Veterans Guardian and another for-profit company, Veteran Benefits Guide.

“There are bad actors,” O’Rourke told a committee of the Florida legislature in February as he opposed a bill to ban unaccredited companies from the state. “We need to find them, deal with them and clean up that area.”

But he said for-profit companies should be legalized. Republicans introduced a bill last year that seeks a pathway to accreditation for the industry, capping fees at \$12,500 for each claim.

The legislative battle has reached a stalemate. The claims staff at VA continues to process disability claims without knowing if they’ve been submitted legally. Trajector withdrew its SEC filing late last year as scrutiny grew, a decision Hill attributed to the falling stock market.

Inspector General Michael Missal’s office, meanwhile, is interviewing witnesses and issuing subpoenas for records in its investigation. That has attracted the interest of senior officials at the Justice Department, according to a person familiar with the probe, which is looking at possible false statements, false medical records and wire fraud. “We are aware of and continue to investigate these schemes,” Missal said in a statement.

VA officials note that if a claim is discovered to be fraudulent, it’s likely to be the veteran — not the company — who will be held liable because its fingerprints are so hard to trace.

Aaron Schaffer, Alice Crites, Razzan Nakhilawi and Monika Mathur contributed to this report.

Democrats urge Roberts to ensure Alito doesn’t take part in Jan. 6 cases

Senators raise ethics concerns after reports about justice’s flags

BY ANN E. MARIMOW AND JUSTIN JOUVENAL

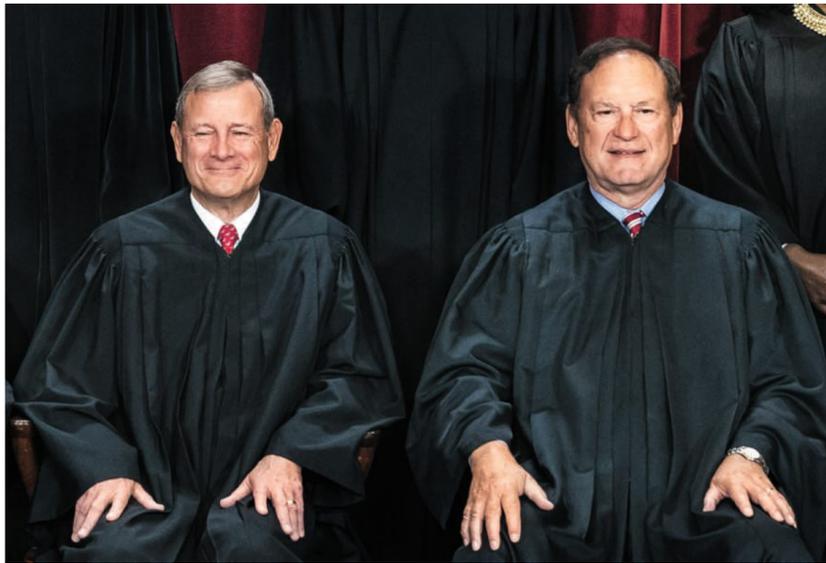
Two Democratic senators are calling on Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. to take immediate steps to ensure that Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. does not participate in a pair of Supreme Court cases related to the 2020 presidential election and the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The request to Roberts comes after the New York Times reported that flags associated with the 2021 attack were flown outside Alito’s homes in Virginia and New Jersey.

Sens. Dick Durbin (Ill.) and Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.), who oversee the federal courts in their respective roles as chairmen of the Senate Judiciary Committee and a judicial oversight subcommittee, requested a meeting with Roberts as soon as possible to discuss what they called an “ethics crisis” at the Supreme Court. In their letter, dated Thursday, the senators renewed calls for the high court to strengthen its ethics policy to include an enforcement mechanism.

The court and its governing body, the Judicial Conference of the United States, have the “ability and responsibility to enforce ethics rules applicable to the justices,” they wrote, but “it remains unclear what actions — if any — the judiciary has taken in response to allegations and reporting on ethical misconduct by Supreme Court justices.”

Roberts did not respond to a



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

Two Democratic senators sent a letter to Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., left, after news reports that flags associated with the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot were flown at Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr.’s homes.

request for comment through the court’s spokesperson.

The letter from the two senators adds to pressure from dozens of Democratic lawmakers who have questioned Alito’s impartiality after the report that an upside-down American flag flew outside his home in the Washington suburbs in the days after the Capitol attack. The flag — long used as a sign of distress by the U.S. military — had become a symbol of the “Stop the Steal” movement, which falsely claims that the 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump. Another flag carried by Jan. 6 rioters, this one embraced by Christian nationalists who want to find a

greater place for religion in public life, was flown outside Alito’s vacation home last summer, the Times reported this week.

A couple who live in the Alitos’ neighborhood in Long Beach Island, N.J., as well as a third person who vacations there confirmed to The Washington Post on Friday that they had seen a flag with the words “An Appeal to Heaven” flying at the Alitos’ beach home last summer. The couple and the vacationer each provided a photo showing it at the property, and The Post also found an image on Google Maps. All three people who said they had seen the flag spoke on the condition of ano-

nymy to protect their privacy and avoid offending their powerful neighbor.

Republican lawmakers, including Sen. Lindsey Graham (S.C.), have characterized the flag displays as bad judgment. But they have stopped short of calling for Alito’s recusal in two significant cases that will be decided in the coming weeks: whether Trump can be criminally prosecuted for his efforts to remain in power after losing to Joe Biden, and whether the Justice Department properly charged more than 300 rioters with obstructing Congress’s certification of the 2020 election. The indictment against Trump in-

cludes that obstruction charge.

Alito said in a statement to the Times that the upside-down American flag flown in the days after the Jan. 6 attack was his wife’s doing and in response to a neighborhood dispute. Alito told Fox News that the flag was raised after a neighbor displayed a political sign attacking Martha-Ann Alito and blaming her for the Jan. 6 riot. He has not responded to the second report involving the “Appeal to Heaven” flag, which dates to the American Revolution.

Neighbors told The Washington Post that signs left in the neighbor’s yard after a protest included one that had Trump’s name, preceded by a profanity, and one that said some version of “You are complicit.”

Stephen Gillers, an expert in judicial ethics at New York University, said he initially gave Alito the benefit of the doubt that the upside-down flag was not tied to the “Stop the Steal” effort. The second flag, he said, makes that theory no longer plausible.

Roberts must encourage Alito to recuse himself from the Trump cases and give him a deadline to do so, Gillers said Friday. He said the chief justice should separately address the circumstances surrounding the flying of the flags, even if Alito does not recuse, because of the intense public interest in the upcoming court decisions, which are expected to be announced by the end of June.

Gillers noted the consequences of the rulings in those cases for the November presidential election, in which Trump is the presumptive Republican nominee. He also cited “Alito’s failure to allay public suspicion with a full explanation for each flag, and the need to reverse the public’s eroding confidence in the court.”

“This is a rare instance when collegiality must yield to protecting the court,” Gillers said.

It was not immediately clear whether Roberts will engage with the Democratic lawmakers’ request. Last spring, the chief justice turned down an invitation from the Senate Judiciary Committee to testify at a bipartisan hearing on court ethics, saying he thought it would be inappropriate to attend. He noted that such appearances are rare in part because of separation-of-powers concerns and the “importance of preserving judicial independence.”

Last fall, in response to other controversies over the court’s ethics, the Supreme Court adopted for the first time a code of conduct that applies specifically to the nine justices. The document was praised as a first step but also criticized by some legal ethics experts who noted that it lacks an enforcement mechanism and said it gives justices too much discretion over recusal decisions.

The decision to not participate in a case because of perceived or actual conflict of interest is up to the individual justice and is not reviewable by colleagues. The court’s new code emphasizes that recusals should be rare because each justice is needed on a nine-member court. Unlike on lower courts, there can be no replacement when a justice sits out.

Justice Clarence Thomas has separately refused to recuse himself from cases related to the 2020 election after revelations that his wife, Virginia “Ginni” Thomas, pressed Trump White House officials to overturn the results and claimed that the election had been stolen.

Jouvenal reported from Long Beach Island, N.J.

Ozempic lowers risk of death from kidney disease, major study finds

BY ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
AND RACHEL ROUBEIN

The active compound in the best-selling drug Ozempic markedly lowers the risk of complications from chronic kidney disease, according to a multiyear study published Friday — a finding that could dramatically expand the pool of patients eligible for the injections.

Funded by Ozempic maker Novo Nordisk and involving 3,533 patients around the world, a study released in Stockholm at the European Renal Association meeting and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that patients receiving semaglutide — the key ingredient — experienced a 24 percent reduction in risk of death from cardiovascular and kidney disease compared with those who received a placebo. The finding proved so striking that the company announced in October that it was stopping the trial early, sending shares of some dialysis

companies falling then.

“These findings offer great promise in reshaping treatment strategies for individuals at high risk of diabetes-related complications,” Vlado Perkovic, a kidney researcher at the University of New South Wales Sydney, said in a statement announcing the results.

Novo Nordisk intends to seek Food and Drug Administration approval this year to update the Ozempic label for use in patients with chronic kidney disease, which affects an estimated 850 million people worldwide. In the United States, the condition affects more than 1 in 7 adults. The company declined to specify when it intends to file its request with the FDA.

“This study highlights our drive to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people living with type 2 diabetes” and kidney disease, said Michael Radin, an executive medical director with Novo Nordisk, in a statement.

Ozempic is part of a class of medications, known as GLP-1 agonists, that mimic a gut hormone that regulates hunger and blood sugar. Ozempic entered the market in 2017 as a treatment for Type 2 diabetes, a leading cause of kidney disease. The company repackaged the active ingredient semaglutide as Wegovy in 2021 for weight management in people who are obese or overweight and have another chronic medical condition.

The drugs were recently shown to have cardiovascular benefits, and research is being conducted regarding potential effects on other conditions, including addiction, sleep apnea and Parkinson’s disease. In March, the FDA approved Wegovy as a treatment to reduce cardiovascular risk in adults who are overweight, which was the first approval of its kind.

FDA spokeswoman Amanda M. Hils said the agency does not speculate on future regulatory action, such as expansion to

Ozempic’s label.

“The FDA continues to monitor the safety of all approved products, including GLP-1 drugs for all approved uses, as well as working with firms that submit applications to the FDA for approval, ensuring that requirements are met and labeling accurately indicates the safety, quality, and effectiveness of an FDA-approved drug,” Hils wrote in an email.

The weight-loss drugs are highly sought after by consumers, leading to repeated shortages, and they have reshaped the culture and conversation surrounding weight, dieting and food consumption.

Early on, some physicians expressed concerns about the drugs’ effect on kidney function, said Melanie Jay, an associate professor of medicine at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine and director of the comprehensive program on obesity. The study, which encompasses more than three years of data, provides

assurance the opposite is true, Jay said.

“Given that kidney disease is so deadly, the risk-benefit analysis is a no-brainer,” Jay said.

But she noted that study participants were overwhelmingly White; only 4.4 percent were Black. In the United States, African Americans are at higher risk of kidney disease and experience more severe illness, so Jay said studies need to determine whether the same impact from the drug is evident in those patients.

“It’s a big issue, and people need to be aware of that,” Jay said.

Federal law prohibits Medicare — the government health insurance plan for older Americans — from covering drugs used for weight loss. But plans participating in Medicare’s voluntary prescription drug benefit can cover GLP-1s for other medical purposes, such as diabetes and cardiovascular risk, according to researchers at KFF, a nonpartisan health research organization. “In many ways, it’s a backdoor

way of providing weight-loss drugs to people on Medicare,” said Tricia Neuman, a senior vice president at KFF.

Wall Street reaction to Friday’s release of the study results was muted given that preliminary results had been released earlier.

In a research note, Citigroup analyst Peter Verdult described as a “red herring” concerns about whether the promising results would hold true across races and ethnicities and among patients with varying baseline weights or degree of kidney damage.

“Subgroup analysis was almost entirely in favour of semaglutide,” he wrote.

Analysts believe the market for semaglutides, already hitting record sales, will grow significantly. According to Citigroup, “just” 20 percent of Type 2 diabetes patients in the United States and 6 percent globally take the GLP-1 drugs.

Daniel Gilbert contributed to this report.

Study gives early look at impact of Florida law

ABORTION FROM A1

wait nearly 14 days to end her pregnancy past that point — up from an average 20-mile drive and five-day wait before the ban, the data shows.

The study is a first-of-its-kind look at the practical impact of the new law in a state where 80,000 abortions had taken place each year. The survey was conducted by Caitlin Myers, a professor of economics at Middlebury College in Vermont and a team of undergraduate students, who systematically collected data from 130 clinics in six states and D.C. for the date of their next available appointment for an abortion after the six-week mark.

Although the survey offers only one window into the effect of the law, clinic directors and staff said it matched their own observations in the weeks since Florida banned most abortions on May 1.

Many said fewer Florida women appeared to be leaving the state for abortion care than was widely expected — a finding they largely attributed to increasing availability of telemedicine and abortion pills, in addition to long driving distances that may leave some women feeling they have no choice but to carry their unwanted pregnancy. At least 8,000 women every month are now obtaining abortion pills through the mail in states with strict abortion bans or significant restrictions in place, according to a recent study by the Society of Family Planning.

“Driving distance and appointment availability remain salient components of abortion access, but less so than they were three years ago,” said Myers, who has spent years quantifying the changing landscape of abortion access.

“Telehealth is really a game changer for abortion access,” she said. “But it might be a fragile one.”

Abortion pills have become a major target for many antiabortion advocates frustrated that studies show abortion numbers have continued to rise since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. A court challenge seeking to restrict access to the pills, brought by a major antiabortion group, is pending before the Supreme Court, with a decision expected by late June.

Eileen Diamond, who runs an abortion clinic in Florida in the Fort Lauderdale area, said patients she has seen since the ban took effect have been extremely reluctant to leave the state if they are still within the 10-week window for taking abortion pills recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Especially relatively early in pregnancy, she said, many experience “this feeling of disbelief” when they’re told they have to travel at least three states away to get an abortion.

“It’s very daunting for them,” Diamond said. “We are seeing a lot of patients turning to finding alternate ways to get pills by mail.”

Myers began conducting surveys of wait times at regular intervals at over 700 clinics across the United States in March 2022, anticipating that *Roe* would fall that summer. The results have helped illustrate the changing landscape of abortion access in the two years since.

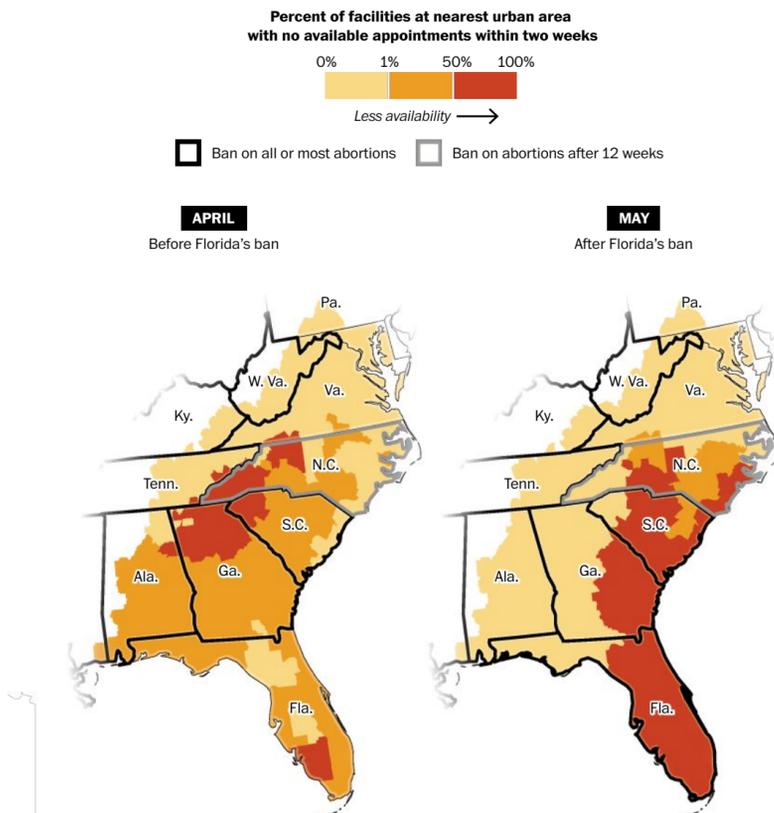
As soon as Texas enacted its six-week “heartbeat ban” in the fall of 2021 — outlawing most abortions nine months before the fall of



Eileen Diamond, left, the director of an abortion clinic in the Fort Lauderdale area, and an assistant administrator look through case files April 30, the day before Florida’s new abortion law took effect.

Residents in Florida and across the South face far longer wait times since new law

Counties in red depict where residents who are further than six weeks into their pregnancies will struggle the most to get an abortion appointment.



Note: Only clinics in D.C., Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Maryland, South Carolina and Virginia were surveyed in May. Some counties outside the states surveyed are shown because the nearest abortion clinic is located in one of the seven jurisdictions included in the study.

Roe — Texas patients quickly overwhelmed clinics in Oklahoma, Kansas and New Mexico, many of which had wait times of several weeks or ran out of appointments altogether, Myers said.

Before the Texas law, approximately 50,000 abortions occurred in the state every year — significantly fewer than had been performed annually in Florida. Despite those numbers, Myers said, “we’re not seeing that level of shock to access with the Florida ban.”

The reason, she said: “a general awareness” of medication and telehealth abortion.

“There are many more options to obtain the pills quickly and cheaply than there used to be,” Myers said.

Since last summer, U.S.-based doctors have been mailing thousands of pills into antiabortion states under “shield laws” recently enacted in a handful of blue states, designed to protect doctors from

prosecution. Women in antiabortion states are also accessing pills through at least 25 nonmedical websites and several community-based networks that distribute the pills free.

Amy Hagstrom Miller, who leads Whole Woman’s Health, a national network of abortion clinics, opened a clinic in New Mexico after she was forced to shutter several clinics in Texas when *Roe* was overturned. The deluge of patients she expected from antiabortion states at that clinic, along with other clinics elsewhere, has yet to materialize, she said.

“We prepared for more of a surge than we’ve seen in any of our clinics,” she said. At her new clinic in New Mexico, which borders Texas, she said, “we’re not even close to capacity.”

With the help of state and national abortion funds, which provide financial support to people seeking abortions, advocates have

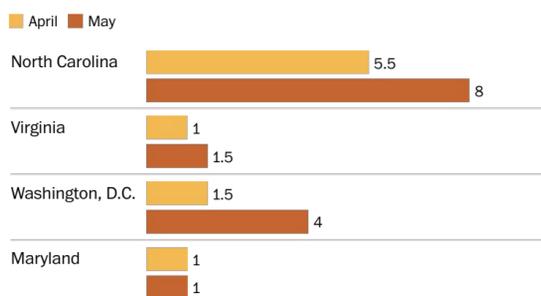
been able to book flights for patients who want to leave the state for an abortion, Diamond said. Some have been able to fly to D.C. in the morning, have their procedure and return home that night.

For others, travel is more difficult. Several patients she has seen since the ban took effect have not been able to fly because they don’t have valid identification, Diamond said. Others can’t leave because they can’t miss work or don’t have anyone to help with child care.

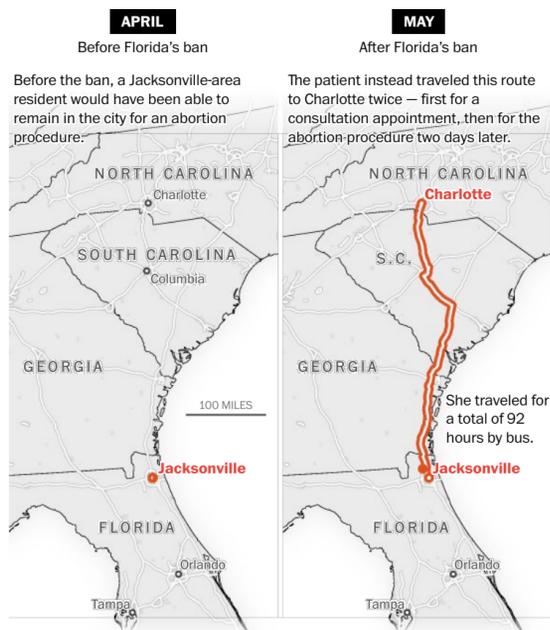
A Washington Post analysis found that, in total, about 7 million women of reproductive age in Florida and surrounding states will now have to travel longer to receive abortions after six weeks of pregnancy. The average affected woman saw a drive-time increase of more than seven hours, analysis using data from OpenStreetMap shows. The group includes an out-

Wait times increase at clinics in some states where most abortions remain legal

Median wait times, in weekdays, until the next available abortion appointment across three states and D.C. before and after the May 1 ban



Source: Caitlin Myers, Middlebury College abortion facility survey data



size number of Black women and poor women, compared with the United States as a whole.

Diamond recounted that one of her patients recently arrived in Fort Lauderdale after driving 18 hours from Houston. She had not heard about the new six-week ban, Diamond said, and was already nine weeks pregnant.

“This woman was desperate,” Diamond said. “She had used everything she had to come to us.”

In the end, she drove on for at least 12 hours from Fort Lauderdale to Virginia, Diamond said — and was planning to drive 17 hours home after the procedure.

North Carolina, where abortion is legal until 12 weeks of pregnancy, is the closest state that offers abortions beyond Florida’s six-week limit. But another law, which requires patients to wait at least 72 hours between an initial in-person consultation with a doctor and the procedure, can make traveling there logistically difficult.

One Florida patient recently traveled 23 hours on a Greyhound bus for a consultation appointment at A Woman’s Choice in Charlotte, according to Lakeynn Huffman, the clinic manager — returning home that night because she could not find child care to cover the full 72 hours she had to wait between appointments.

The woman made the same trip two days later, Huffman said — traveling for a total of 92 hours to get an abortion.

Ordering pills online can be a nerve-racking experience for some patients, Diamond said.

“They’re worried the pills won’t get there, worried they don’t have a clinic to back them up,” she said.

Nearly three weeks after the new ban took effect, Diamond said she had started hearing from far

fewer patients in the second trimester, which begins at 13 weeks of pregnancy, beyond the FDA’s 10-week limit for taking abortion pills.

“They’re not coming to clinic. They’re not calling about travel,” she said.

Many, she said, may now assume there is nothing they can do in the face of a six-week ban.

“I think they are carrying these pregnancies,” she said.

Clara Ence Morse contributed to this report.

Methodology

The Post used the most recent survey data collected by Caitlin Myers, a professor of economics at Middlebury College, and a team of undergraduate students.

The survey collected data from 130 clinics representing all providers in six states — Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland — as well as D.C. These locations were surveyed in April 2024, prior to the Florida ban, and then again on May 13, 2024. The survey involved calling each facility to ask (1) about the availability of medication and procedural (surgical) abortions, and (2) for the date of the next available appointment for each type of abortion.

The analysis for this story relied on comparisons between the April and May survey data. If appointments were available at a facility, the team calculated the “wait time” as the minimum number of weekdays until the next available appointment for an abortion, of any type.

Students conducting the May 13 survey were Isabelle Cone, Georgia Crosby, Emma Dobson, Avery Goldstein, Kate Goodman, Angel Gurung, Sarah Holmes, Julia Joy, Emily Kuperstein, Sascha Leidecker, Awa-Victoria Morel, Grace Mumford, Audrey Peiker, Emily Ribeiro, Grace Sokolow, Shay Soodak and Claire Vermillion.

THE WORLD

U.S. fingerprints are all over Kenya-led plan to help Haiti

After refusing to take charge or send troops, American government is largely financing and arming mission to stop gang violence

BY WIDLORE MÉRANCOURT,
SAMANTHA SCHMIDT
AND AMANDA COLETTA

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI — Hundreds of foreign police officers, requested more than 18 months ago by a prime minister who has since resigned, will soon touch down in Haiti, a U.N.-approved stabilization force for a country in chaos.

The mission is to be led by Kenya, with up to 2,500 police officers and soldiers from several countries to support Haiti's beleaguered national police against the armed gangs who control an estimated 80 percent of the capital. The coalition was painstakingly assembled by the Biden administration, which said from the outset it would neither lead the effort nor provide troops but struggled to find a country willing to take it up.

"We concluded that for the United States to deploy forces in the hemisphere just raises all kinds of questions that can be easily misrepresented about what we're trying to do," President Biden said Thursday during a news conference with Kenyan President William Ruto. "So we set out to find a partner or partners who would lead the effort that we would participate in."

Still, the effort is to be financed, armed and trained largely by the United States. And on the ground right now in Port-au-Prince, the Americans appear to be running the show.

U.S. diplomats co-wrote the U.N. resolution approving the force. The C-130s that bring construction equipment and supplies into the international airport here daily belong to the U.S. Air Force. American taxpayers are to provide the bulk of the funding. U.S. Southern Command is setting up a base of operations here.

"The real country backing the Kenyans with materials and support is the United States," said Louis Gérard Gilles, a member of the interim council that is running Haiti.

A small group of Kenyan officials arrived in Port-au-Prince this week, and Gen. Laura Richardson, the Southcom commander, has said "we will be ready to go on the 23rd of May." Ruto told The Washington Post last week that he expected a contingent of 200 officers to arrive in Haiti by the end of the month.

"There are outstanding issues around equipment," he said. "There are [also] some outstanding agreements with the neighboring countries for purposes of evacuation if need be, of our personnel ..."

"We believe that those outstanding matters will be resolved in the coming days."

As Ruto arrived in Washington for a state visit on Thursday, it was unclear whether that deployment was still on track, or whether Haiti's skeletal interim government was prepared to receive it. Congressional Republicans have blocked some funding, citing unanswered questions about the rules of engagement and exit strategy. Members of the transitional presidential council, running the government until a new president and legislature are elected, say they have received few details.

"If we're saying this is to support the Haitian authorities but the Haitian authorities are not fully empowered or functional, how can we be moving forward with this deployment and surging resources on the ground?" asked Jake Johnston, a research associ-



DONWILSON ODHIAMBO/GETTY IMAGES

Police officers in Nairobi respond in March 2023 to a demonstration. Kenyan police will soon arrive in Haiti to help counter gangs controlling the capital, Port-au-Prince.



RAMON ESPINOSA/AP

Relatives grieve during the burial service for Jhon-Roselet Joseph on May 18 in Port-au-Prince. Roselet was killed by a stray bullet during a clash between Haitian police and gang members.

ate at the Washington-based Center for Economic and Policy Research. "Nobody knows who is ultimately calling the shots."

This Caribbean nation of 11 million is beset by gang violence, political chaos and poverty. The presidency remains vacant since the 2021 assassination of Jovenel Moïse; embattled Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned last month.

Three missionaries, two of them Americans, were shot to death in a gang attack in Port-au-Prince on Thursday evening, Oklahoma-based Missions in Haiti Inc. said. The mayor of the Croix-des-Bouquets neighborhood told The Post that there has

been no police presence in the area since an attack on the local police station on Feb. 29, and investigators were unable to reach the scene.

The transitional council, sworn in last month, has yet to create a national security council to coordinate with the mission. The council was expected to discuss rules of engagement with Kenyan officials during a meeting on Thursday, member Leslie Voltaire told The Post.

On Wednesday, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), chair of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, joined fellow Democrats in urging Republican leaders on the House

Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to lift a hold on \$94 million for the security mission.

The United States has pledged \$300 million. In April, Biden used his drawdown authority to direct \$60 million to provide "anti-crime and counternarcotics" support for the mission and the Haitian National Police.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned this week that Haiti "is really on the precipice ... of becoming a failed state."

The mission is "focused on police and it's really focused on strengthening and bolstering the capacity of the Haitian National

Police to take this on themselves," Blinken said Wednesday. "This is not us policing the world."

Kenya will provide the bulk of the troops here. Also pledging personnel are Caribbean neighbors Barbados, Jamaica and the Bahamas, plus Bangladesh, Belize, Benin and Chad. Canada and France have provided funding.

But Haitians see the United States as the real power here.

"I have the impression that we are facing a U.S. force disguised as Kenyan," said Wethzer Piercin, a 25-year-old linguistics student in Port-au-Prince. "They are leveraging Kenya's history to their advantage. It's their best option, but they are the ones bolstering the force and organizing meetings with President Ruto."

Piercin said he felt "some hope" at the arrival of the Kenyans, but said it was local forces who should solve Haiti's security crisis.

Cadafy Noël, a 31-year-old digital entrepreneur in Jérémie, was skeptical of U.S. intentions.

"When it comes to the United States' involvement in the strategy to establish peace in the country, we don't see many results," he said. "Most of the guns come from the U.S. We don't see any effort to curb gun trafficking."

Still, he said, "we are eager to see the force working with the police to bring some results and peace."

Haiti has suffered a long history of destabilizing foreign interventions. The U.N. mission from 2004 to 2017 achieved mixed results against Haiti's armed gangs. The military component of the mission, led by Brazil with troops from more than 20 countries, is remembered largely for alleged rights abuses and a cholera outbreak that killed nearly 10,000 people.

The United States and Haitian police have resumed flights here by strengthening security around the international airport, said Gilles, the transitional council member. Richardson said a "limited" number of uniformed U.S. personnel would handle logistics and sustainment.

Dennis B. Hankins, the U.S. ambassador to Haiti, appeared alongside Haiti's chief of police and the airport's director on Sunday to present the country with 10 armored vehicles.

Hankins said the United States had identified, in coordination with the Haitian government, the site for the mission's operations, which "should begin before the end of the month."

Each military flight includes a small contingent of security personnel for the aircraft, Hankins said, and a private security firm has been contracted to secure the construction site. The foreign troops, he said, "are here to reinforce the government's forces, not replace them," Hankins said.

Gilles welcomed their coming arrival.

"To avoid past mistakes," he said, "they need to support the national police, vet the institution to remove corrupt officers, provide weapons to the police, increase the police force, modernize it, and train them in techniques to combat gangs."

They'll face the challenge of dislodging the heavily armed militias. Even if they manage to push the gangs out of the capital, Voltaire said, he fears they could simply spread violence in other parts of the country.

Schmidt reported from Bogotá, Colombia. Coletta reported from Toronto. Katharine Houreld in Nairobi and John Hudson in Washington contributed to this report.

DIGEST

PAPUA NEW GUINEA Over 100 believed dead in landslide

More than 100 people are believed to have been killed in a landslide Friday that buried a village in a remote, mountainous part of Papua New Guinea, and an emergency response is underway, officials in the South Pacific island nation said.

The landslide struck Enga province, about 370 miles northwest of the capital, Port Moresby, at roughly 3 a.m., the Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported. Residents from surrounding areas said boulders and trees from a collapsed mountainside buried parts of the community and left it isolated.

Residents said that estimates of the death toll were above 100,

although authorities haven't confirmed that figure.

The chief of the International Organization for Migration's mission in Papua New Guinea, Serhan Aktoprak, said the landslide struck Yambali village, which is about two hours' drive from Enga's provincial capital of Wabag. Yambali sits along a road leading from the capital that is now blocked, hampering relief efforts, Aktoprak said.

He said the village is home to 3,895 people. "Given the scale of the disaster," he said, the death toll could be higher than original estimates of about 100.

Prime Minister James Marape said authorities were responding and that he would release information about the destruction and loss of life when it was available.

— Associated Press

GERMANY 2 held in alleged plot to attack synagogue

German authorities said Friday that they have arrested two men suspected of plotting a knife attack on worshippers at a synagogue in the southwestern city of Heidelberg.

The suspects, who are 24 and 18 years old, were detained during separate police operations in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg earlier this month, German news agency dpa reported, citing state prosecutors and police.

The pair discussed "the killing of one or more visitors in the attack on the synagogue followed by death as martyrs, whereby the two persons wanted to be shot to death by police," authorities said

in a joint statement. The pair could face charges including conspiracy to commit murder.

Police uncovered the plot when they searched the home of the older suspect on May 3, authorities said. During the search, a police officer shot and injured the suspect after he had grabbed a knife.

The suspects' names were not released.

— Associated Press

A British woman and three children linked to the militant Islamic State group in Syria were handed over to a U.K. delegation that visited the region this week, Syrian Kurdish-led authorities said Friday. The handover, which took place on Wednesday, is the latest in a push to repatriate people from al-Hol and Roj camps in northeastern Syria that

house tens of thousands, mostly wives and children of ISIS militants but also supporters of the extremist group. The Kurdish authorities did not release the names of the four, saying only that they were held at Roj camp before the handover.

A police officer in New Caledonia fatally shot a man Friday after being attacked by a group of about 15 people, the territory's prosecutor said, the seventh shooting death in the unrest shaking the French Pacific archipelago. The officer was in custody, and an investigation was underway. Prosecutor Yves Dupas said the officer is believed to have fired one shot, killing the 48-year-old man on Friday afternoon. The fatal shooting came hours after an emergency round-trip from Paris by French

President Emmanuel Macron to de-escalate the violence.

The distributor of a popular protest song in Hong Kong is removing the music from all platforms because of a court ban in the city, the group that created the song said Friday, a week after YouTube blocked access to its videos. Dgxmusic said on Instagram that it expressed its opposition to the decision by EmuBands, the distributor, to remove "Glory to Hong Kong," widely sung by demonstrators during huge anti-government protests in 2019. The song has been removed from iTunes and Apple Music in various regions, the group said. Most versions of were also unavailable on Spotify in Hong Kong on Friday.

— From wire reports

Three missionaries from Okla.-based group fatally shot in Haiti

Daughter, son-in-law of Mo. state representative among the victims

BY WIDLORE MÉRANCOURT AND AMANDA COLETTA

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI — Three people from an Oklahoma-based missionary group, including the daughter and son-in-law of a Missouri state representative, were shot and killed in a gang attack in Haiti as they were leaving an event at a church, the organization said Friday.

State Rep. Ben Baker (R) and Missions in Haiti identified the victims as David “Davy” Lloyd III, 23, son of the organization’s founders; his wife and Baker’s daughter, Natalie Lloyd, 21; and

Jude Montis, 45, its country director. They were coming out of a church Thursday evening when they were ambushed by “a gang of 3 trucks full of guys,” Missions in Haiti said on its Facebook page.

“They were three great people,” David Lloyd, who founded the group with his wife, Alicia, told The Washington Post. “They’re irreplaceable. I’m at a loss as how to continue going forward without them.”

“My heart is broken in a thousand pieces,” Baker said on Facebook. “They went to Heaven together.” He asked for prayers for the Baker and Lloyd families.

The State Department is aware of “reports of the deaths of U.S. citizens in Haiti,” a spokesperson said, and stands “ready to provide all appropriate consular assistance.”

The Caribbean nation of 11 million people is beset by gang vio-

lence, political corruption and endemic poverty. Its presidency has been vacant since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, and its legislature empty since the last lawmakers’ terms expired early last year. Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned last month.

The paramilitary groups launched an attack on the main airport in Port-au-Prince in February, shutting it for nearly three months. It reopened this week.

The government is now run by a transitional presidential council tasked with holding new elections. A U.N.-approved international police force, led by Kenya and funded and trained largely by the United States, is preparing to deploy to Port-au-Prince this month to help the Haitian National Police confront heavily armed gangs that control an estimated 80 percent of the capital.

The Claremore, Okla.-based

Missions in Haiti this week expressed optimism about the deployment: “Some gangs are realizing their rule is about to come to an end.”

The independent nonprofit, founded in 2000, runs a church and a children’s home in the Bon Repos district of Port-au-Prince and a bakery that provides bread for the children and employs them when they become adults. It has about 50 employees.

Gang members stole their vehicles and took Davy Lloyd to a house where he was tied up and beaten, the organization said. Another gang arrived to see “if they could help, so they say,” but when one of its members was killed, the gang “went into full attack mode” and began shooting at the house where the three missionaries were held.

The missionaries used Starlink satellite internet service to call

for help, and the organization tried to procure an armored police vehicle to evacuate them, it said. But help never came, and all three were fatally shot.

Davy and Natalie Lloyd married in Missouri in 2022, David Lloyd said. He said Alicia left the country in April aboard a State Department evacuation flight because she had medical issues. He left Wednesday with his youngest son after the airport reopened.

Lloyd said the plan was for family members to rotate in and out. He said he had asked Davy if he and Natalie wanted to leave this week, but Davy declined, saying his father should join Alicia in the United States for two or three weeks since they’d been separated since April. He and Natalie would leave when Lloyd returned.

“I preferred me just to be there when it’s really going bad, because I didn’t want my family to

get caught up in something,” Lloyd said, “but Davy was like, ‘Dad, I’m an adult now. This is where I want to be.’ He grew up there. He loved Haiti.”

The State Department urges U.S. citizens against traveling to Haiti. In a long-standing travel warning, it cites widespread kidnapping — among other violent crimes — that regularly targets Americans and other foreigners, often with firearms. The U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince periodically advises Americans in Haiti to leave as quickly as possible.

Lloyd said that all of the children have been evacuated to a safer area and that Missions in Haiti had never had any problems with the gangs — until Thursday.

Coletta reported from Toronto. Michael Birnbaum in Washington contributed to this report.

U.S., other suppliers try to bolster Ukrainian arms against Russian jamming

UKRAINE FROM AI

ample, fell sharply over a period of months — to less than 10 percent hitting their targets — before Ukraine’s military abandoned them last year, according to the confidential Ukrainian assessments.

While other news accounts have described Russia’s superior electronic warfare capabilities, the documents obtained by The Post include previously unreported details on the extent to which Russian jamming has thwarted Western weaponry.

“The Excalibur technology in existing versions has lost its potential,” the assessments found, adding that battlefield experience in Ukraine had disproved its reputation as a “one shot, one target” weapon — at least until the Pentagon and U.S. manufacturers address the issue.

Six months ago, after Ukrainians reported the problem, Washington simply stopped providing Excalibur shells because of the high failure rate, the Ukrainian officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive security matter. In other cases, such as aircraft-dropped bombs called JDAMs, the manufacturer provided a patch and Ukraine continues to use them.

Ukraine’s military command prepared the reports between fall 2023 and April 2024 and shared them with the United States and other supporters, hoping to develop solutions and open up direct contact with weapons manufacturers. In interviews, Ukrainian officials described an overly bureaucratic process that they said had complicated a path toward urgently needed adjustments to improve the failing weaponry.

The officials agreed to answer questions about the assessments in hopes of drawing attention to the Ukrainian military’s needs. Several Ukrainian and U.S. officials interviewed for this story spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The Pentagon anticipated that some precision-guided munitions would be defeated by Russian electronic warfare and has worked with Ukraine to hone tactics and techniques, a senior U.S. defense official said.

Russia “has continued to expand their use of electronic warfare,” the senior U.S. official said. “And we continue to evolve and make sure that Ukraine has the capabilities they need to be effective.”

The U.S. defense official rejected claims that bureaucracy has slowed the response. The Pentagon and weapons manufacturers have provided solutions sometimes within hours or days, the official said, but did not provide examples.

Ukraine’s Defense Ministry, in a statement, said it cooperates regularly with the Pentagon and also communicates directly with weapons manufacturers.

“We work closely with the Pentagon on such matters. In the event of technical problems, we promptly inform our partners to take the necessary measures to solve them in a timely manner,” the ministry said. “Our partners from the USA and other Western countries provide constant support for our requests. In particular, we regularly receive recommendations to improve the equipment.”

U.S.-made guided munitions provided to Ukraine typically were successful when introduced, but often became less so as Russian forces adapted. Now, some arms once considered potent tools no longer provide an edge.

In a conventional war, the U.S. military might not face the same difficulties as Ukraine because it has a more advanced air force and



ANASTASIA VLASOVA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

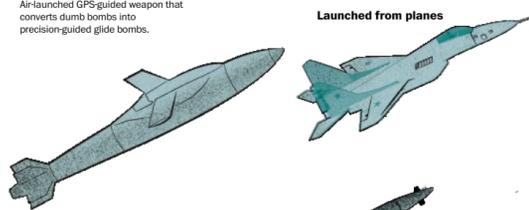
A Ukrainian commander displays a U.S.-built HIMARS vehicle in 2022. The system uses GPS-guided rockets, and Russian jamming can affect them. “The Americans are equipping HIMARS with additional equipment to ensure good geolocation,” a Ukrainian official said.

Some of the weapons affected by Russian jamming

JDAM-ER MISSILE

Joint Direct Attack Munition-Extended Range

Air-launched GPS-guided weapon that converts dumb bombs into precision-guided glide bombs.

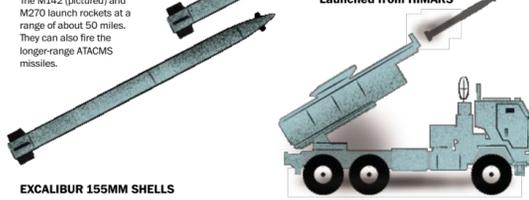


Launched from planes

M30/M31 ROCKETS

Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System

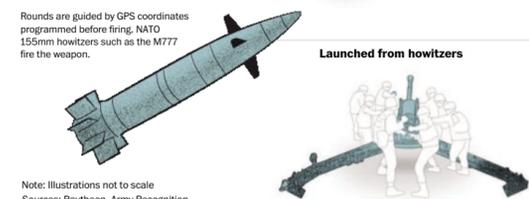
The M142 (pictured) and M270 launch rockets at a range of about 50 miles. They can also fire the longer-range ATACMS missiles.



Launched from HIMARS

EXCALIBUR 155MM SHELLS

Rounds are guided by GPS coordinates programmed before firing. NATO 155mm howitzers such as the M777 fire the weapon.



Launched from howitzers

Note: Illustrations not to scale. Sources: Raytheon, Army Recognition

robust electronic countermeasures, but Russia’s capabilities nonetheless put heavy pressure on Washington and its NATO allies to continue innovating.

“I’m not saying no one was worried about it before, but now they’re starting to worry,” one senior Ukrainian military official said.

“As we share information with our partners and our partners share with us, the Russians definitely also share with China,” the official added. “And even if they don’t share with China ... China monitors events in Ukraine.”

Failing to strike targets

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine created a modern testing ground for Western arms that had never been used against a foe with Moscow’s ability to jam GPS navigation.

Innovation is a feature of virtually every conflict, including the

war in Ukraine, where each side deploys technology and novel changes to outfox the other and exploit vulnerabilities. The Russian military has been adept at electronic warfare for years, analysts and officials said, investing in systems that can overwhelm the signals and frequency of electronic components, such as GPS navigation, which helps guide some precision munitions to their targets.

Ukrainians initially found success using Excalibur 155mm rounds, with more than 50 percent accurately hitting their targets early last year, according to the confidential assessment, which was based on direct visual observations. Over the next several months, that dropped below 10 percent, with the assessment pointing to Russian GPS jamming as the culprit.

The study cautioned that far fewer shells were fired later in the research period, and many were

not observed, leaving the precise success rate unclear.

But even before the United States ceased deliveries, Ukrainian artillerymen had largely stopped using Excalibur, the assessments said, because the shells are harder to use compared with standard howitzer rounds, requiring time-consuming special calculations and programming. Now they are shunned altogether, military personnel in the field said.

The senior Ukrainian official said Kyiv shared this feedback with Washington but got no response. The Ukrainians have faced a similar challenge with guided 155mm shells provided by other Western countries. Some employ guidance other than GPS, and it is unclear why they also became less effective. U.S. defense officials declined to address the Ukrainian assertion.

The Excalibur precision artillery round typifies many U.S. weapons: pricey and sophisticated but accurate. Ukraine has used the rounds, fired by U.S. artillery systems such as the M777, to destroy targets, like enemy artillery and armored vehicles, from about 15 to 24 miles away.

Rob Lee, a senior fellow with the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a Philadelphia-based research group, said Russia’s use of electronic warfare to combat guided munitions was an important battlefield development in the past year. Many weapons are potent when they’re introduced, but they lose effectiveness over time, Lee said, part of a nonstop game of cat-and-mouse between adversaries who constantly adapt and innovate.

The involvement of defense companies is crucial to overcoming Russian defenses such as jamming, Lee said.

“The problem with a lot of Western defense companies,” Lee said, compared with Russian manufacturers, is that “there is not the same sense of urgency.”

Dense web of jamming

A web of Russian electronic warfare systems and air defenses menace Ukrainian pilots, the documents said, adding that some Russian jammers also scramble the navigation system of planes. The Russian defense is so dense, the assessment found, that there are “no open windows for the Ukrainian pilots where they feel that they are not at gunpoint.”

Despite some effort to thwart the jamming, potential fixes seem limited until the West delivers F-16 fighter jets, the assessment found. Such modern planes would allow Ukraine’s air force to push Russian pilots back, enabling the use of different kinds of weapons with greater range and ability to avoid some electronic warfare systems.

The aircraft-dropped JDAMs provide another example of declining effectiveness of weaponry. Their introduction, in February 2023, was a surprise to Russia. But within weeks, success rates dropped after “non resistance” to jamming was revealed, according to the assessment. In that period, bombs missed their targets from as little as 65 feet to about three-quarters of a mile.

Ukraine provided feedback about the jamming problem, and the United States and weapons manufacturers delivered improved systems last May, the documents said. The guidance systems were more resistant, but Russian forces increased countermeasures over the summer. Hit rates dropped to a low in July. Overall, the hit rate was more than 60 percent for much of the year.

HIMARS launchers were celebrated during the first year of Russia’s invasion for their success in striking ammunition depots and command points behind enemy lines.

But by the second year, “everything ended: The Russians deployed electronic warfare, disabled satellite signals, and HIMARS became completely ineffective,” a second senior Ukrainian military official said. “This ineffectiveness led to the point where a very expensive shell was used” increasingly to strike lower-priority targets.

The Ukrainian military documents did not assess guided M30 or M31 munitions, which are fired from HIMARS launchers. But in January, Ukraine’s military command wrote a policy paper urging Western supporters to provide an alternative: M26 cluster munitions that also could be launched from multiple-launch rocket systems. These low-tech, unguided rockets are resistant to jamming, and the cluster submunitions can still hit targets in a wide area even if the shot is imprecise.

Kyiv still considers its HIMARS rockets effective, but Russian jamming can cause them to miss a target by 50 feet or more.

“When it’s, for example, a pontoon bridge ... but there’s a 10-meter deviation, it ends up in the water,” the first Ukrainian official said.

Russian jamming signals are sent up from the ground and form a cone-shaped area. Any guided munition — or aircraft — passing through is at risk of interference.

A battalion commander, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to do so publicly, described flying a reconnaissance drone in foggy conditions last year in Bakhmut to track a HIMARS strike on a Russian position. On his screen, the commander watched in dismay as each rocket missed.

Countermeasures

One way the Ukrainians counter Russia’s jamming is by targeting known electronic warfare systems with drones before using HIMARS. This has proved effective in some cases.

“Initially, there were no problems,” the first senior official added. “It was simple: The machine arrived. The button was pressed and there was a precise hit. Now, it’s more complicated.”

The official added, “The Americans are equipping HIMARS with additional equipment to ensure good geolocation.”

One U.S. weapon used by aircraft, the GBU-39 small-diameter bomb, has proved resilient to jamming, according to the confidential documents. Nearly 90 percent of dropped bombs struck their target, the assessment found.

Its smaller surface area makes it more difficult for Russian systems to detect and intercept, the documents said. Ukraine first received the aerial weapons — a delivery not previously disclosed by the Pentagon — in November 2023.

The GBU-39 was also adapted for land use in HIMARS launchers, a development that Pentagon officials said would increase the range of rocket artillery. But the modified weapons, known as Ground Launched Small Diameter Bombs, or GLSDB, proved ineffective compared with those launched from airplanes, Ukrainian officials said. The ground versions were tested in Ukraine, one official said, and the Americans are working on adjustments before providing them anew.

William LaPlante, the Pentagon’s acquisition chief, said last month that an adapted weapon “didn’t work for multiple reasons,” including jamming and other tactical and logistical issues. LaPlante did not disclose which weapon he was referring to, but other experts said that he was describing the GLSDB.

“When you send something to people in the fight of their lives,” LaPlante said, “they’ll try it three times and then they just throw it aside.”

Senior Ukrainian military officials said Storm Shadow air-launched cruise missiles, provided by Britain, are less susceptible to Russian jamming because they do not rely solely on GPS but two other navigation systems, including an internal map that matches the terrain of its intended flight path. Russian air defenses nonetheless have had some success intercepting them.

The Ukrainians have also had success so far with U.S.-provided Army Tactical Missile System long-range missiles, which have a range of up to 190 miles, but they, too, can be targeted by Russian air defenses.

The Ukrainian officials said they expect that weapons effective on the battlefield now will similarly slump within a year.

“The Russians will learn how to fight it,” the second Ukrainian official said. “That’s how the arms race works.”

Horton reported from Washington.

World Court order to halt Rafah assault will be difficult to enforce without U.S.

GAZA FROM AI

fense Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as three members of the Hamas militant group's senior leadership, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The United Nations Security Council has also ordered a temporary halt in the fighting, to no avail.

In a closely watched case brought by South Africa in January, the ICJ had already ordered Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent genocide and to allow urgently needed humanitarian aid to flow into the enclave. This time, the court was asked to consider whether changes on the ground since that initial ruling were sufficiently urgent to require the panel to order an end to the fighting in and around Rafah.

In a statement read aloud inside The Hague's Peace Palace, ICJ President Nawaf Salam said the court was not convinced by measures that Israel says it has taken to alleviate civilian suffering.

The panel voted 13-2 in favor of an order that Israel "immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

In a hearing last week, Israel had argued that the granting of South Africa's request would leave Hamas free to launch attacks on Israeli territory. In a separate opinion, Dire Tladi, a South African judge on the court, described that position as a "false choice between two extremes."

"It suggests that Israel is obliged either to allow the violation of its rights and those of its citizens or to engage in limitless operations causing the catastrophic consequences that have been so widely reported," he wrote.

The court's order applied to offensive action in Rafah, he said. "Legitimate defensive actions, within the strict confines of international law, to repel specific attacks, would be consistent with the Order of the Court."

The conflict began Oct. 7, when Hamas militants killed about 1,200 people in southern Israel and took more than 240 others back to Gaza as hostages. Israel says its military campaign is aimed at eliminating the group, which ruled besieged Gaza for years, but the overwhelming firepower of Israeli forces has also leveled districts, destroyed the territory's ability to feed itself, and damaged its hospital network.

More than 35,800 Palestinians have been killed during the seven-month operation, and another 80,000 have been wounded. The ICJ also ordered Israel to allow international investigators to enter Gaza, and reiterated a previous order for the immediate release of more than 100 hostages still held by Hamas and other groups.

Israeli officials reject the genocide charges, arguing that the soaring death toll in Gaza is an unavoidable consequence of battling an enemy that embeds in civilian areas. Benny Gantz, a centrist member of Israel's war cabinet, said Friday that the Israeli military would continue its fight in Rafah.

"The State of Israel is committed to continue fighting to return its hostages and promise the security of its citizens — wherever and whenever necessary — including in Rafah," he said in a statement after the ICJ's ruling was announced. That fight, he said, would take place "in accordance with international law."

The mounting international pressure has helped Netanyahu at home, galvanizing even his opponents into outrage. Many Israelis view the moves by international



Smoke rises during an Israeli airstrike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Friday. Israeli officials indicated that they would ignore an International Court of Justice order to halt the offensive there.

courts as misinterpretations of a war they see as existential.

A poll conducted by Israel's Maariv newspaper, published Friday, found that 43 percent of those surveyed thought intensive military activity was the best route to freeing the hostages. Nearly half, or 49 percent, disagreed with the assertion that the ICC's arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant were the result of Israel's poor execution of the war.

Friday's ruling could also cause problems for the Biden administration. The United States has been a key supporter of the ICJ's work, but is also Israel's most important political and military ally, providing the majority of the weaponry that Israeli forces are using in their Gaza campaign.

The court's orders must be enforced by the U.N. Security Council, whose five permanent mem-

bers, including the United States, can veto resolutions.

Oumar Ba, an assistant professor of government at Cornell University, said, however, that the court's decision was significant in the message it sent to Israel and its allies.

"It clearly states where the line has been drawn by the court when it comes to international law," he said. "There is certainly an acceleration here... of Israel being basically on the accused bench and having to defend its stance and its action in the eye of the international community."

The ICJ had ordered "provisional measures" Jan. 26, declaring that Palestinians had a right to be protected from acts of genocide and calling on Israel to take "all measures within its power" to prevent such actions, including by facilitating humanitarian aid.

But four months later, aid has slowed to a trickle, and the World Food Program says that northern Gaza is in "full-blown famine."

Hundreds of thousands of people fleeing Rafah have packed into the rubble-strewn city of Khan Younis or pitched tents on a beachfront in the Mawasi district that is so crowded that families are living just feet from the high-tide mark.

The Biden administration had repeatedly warned Israel that a major military operation in Rafah constituted a red line for U.S. support. Now, with the offensive underway, administration officials have characterized Israel's movements as "targeted and limited."

Egypt on Friday said it agreed to begin sending aid trucks through Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing, after Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi spoke on the phone with President Biden.

After Israeli troops seized the Rafah crossing, Egypt refused to allow relief supplies backed up on its territory to be inspected at Kerem Shalom, which is just across the border with Israel.

Still, the move was unlikely to result in improved aid flow to Gaza. Aid agencies there say accessing Kerem Shalom from the Palestinian side is difficult and risky — the area is a closed military zone, with active fighting nearby.

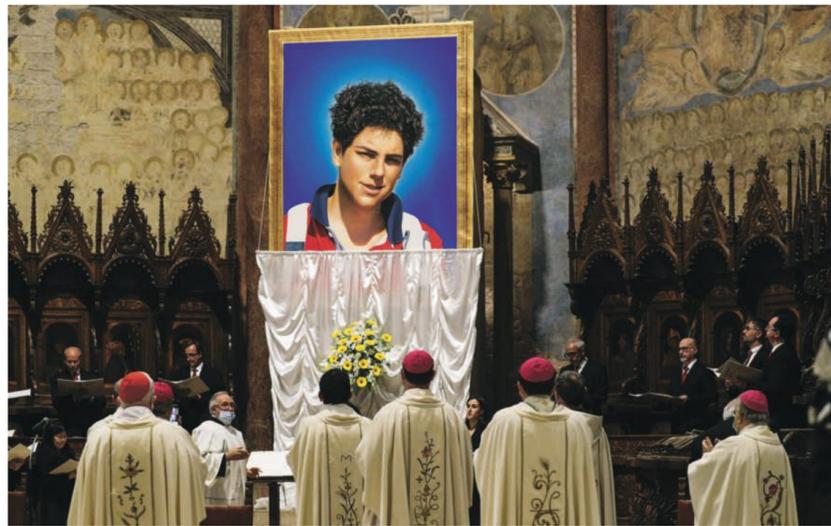
Mary Ellen O'Connell, a professor of law and peace studies at the University of Notre Dame, described the ICJ's ruling Friday as the clearest indication yet that the operation in Rafah might be unfolding in contravention of international humanitarian law.

"This order from the court, 13, including the judge of U.S. nationality, are all saying this offensive cannot go forward," she said.

"That should be the final word that President Biden needs to order the immediate cessation of weapons delivery," she said. "We have a statute in the United States that we cannot deliver military assistance to a country that's violating international humanitarian law. You can't get a clearer decision or ruling on that being the case than this judgment."

In the statement from ICC prosecutor Karim Khan, he said he had reasonable grounds to believe Netanyahu and Gallant were responsible for crimes including starvation as a method of warfare, willful killing and murder, extermination, and intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population.

The ICC is separate from the ICJ, but the warrant applications put further pressure on Israel. On Friday, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned countries against trying to intimidate the ICC as a panel of judges considers Khan's request.



An image of 15-year-old Carlo Acutis, who died of leukemia in 2006, is unveiled in October 2020 during his beatification ceremony in St. Francis Basilica in Assisi, Italy.

Pope clears the way for teen blogger to become the first millennial saint

The church recognizes a second miracle linked to Carlo Acutis

BY KELSEY ABLES

An early-aughts blog is probably not where you'd expect to find the next Mother Teresa, but that is where Carlo Acutis — soon to become the first millennial saint in the Catholic Church — made a name for himself documenting miracles.

The Holy See said Thursday that Pope Francis has recognized a second miracle linked to Acutis, paving the way for his canonization — the final step in a process that can sometimes take decades. It will place the online evangelizer — who died in 2006 of leukemia at age 15 — among thousands of saints recognized by the church.

The Catholic Church has struggled to pull in young people as it wrestles with criticism of its outdated practices, views of gender equality and sexual abuse scandals that have alienated its members. Pope Francis has made efforts to increase inclusivity in the deeply hierarchical institution, such as by allowing blessings for same-sex couples and calling on theologians to "demasculinize" the church, often drawing ire from conservatives.

Vatican News, the official news portal of the Holy See, on Thursday announced multiple developments related to the canonization of new saints, but "for young Catholics, the most interesting is surely

the recognition of a miracle attributed to Blessed Carlo Acutis."

Born in London in 1991, Acutis has drawn a following for his piety and meticulous research on miracles, which he publicized online. One Catholic publication dubbed him "God's Influencer," while another site described him as a teen with a "strong faith and a weakness for Nutella." Vatican News wrote that he loved soccer, video games and was a "natural joker."

When Acutis was beatified in 2020, white-cloaked Holy See officials gathered around a massive portrait of the teen, showing him wearing a red polo shirt and a backpack. The following year, an estimated 117,000 people visited the tomb where his body is on display in the Nike sneakers, jeans and track jacket he was buried in, according to the Catholic News Service.

Starting at age 11, Acutis began investigating Eucharistic miracles — when the bread and wine served at Catholic Mass, believed to be the body and blood of Christ, are said to take on the biological characteristics of human flesh or blood. An exhibition of his project went on to be displayed at thousands of churches around the world.

Those around him were "astonished by his ability to understand the hidden secrets of computing, which are normally accessible only to those who have studied at university level," according to a website advocating for his sainthood. During Acutis's beatification, Pope Francis said he "grasped the needs of his time."

The process of becoming a saint typically begins when a

bishop opens an investigation into the life of a deceased person with a reputation for "exceptional holiness," at which point that person can be declared a "Servant of God," according to the website for the University of Southern California's Dornsife College. With further research, they can reach the next title, "Venerable." To be beatified or recognized as "Blessed," the Vatican usually must recognize at least one miracle the person performed. Two miracles are typically required for canonization.

The second miracle, announced Thursday, reportedly involved a woman from Costa Rica who in 2022 prayed at Acutis's tomb in Assisi, Italy, after her daughter fell from her bicycle, suffering severe head trauma that doctors said she was not likely to survive. Vatican News reported that days after the woman's visit to the tomb, a CT scan "proved that her [daughter's] hemorrhage had disappeared."

In 2020, the church recognized his first miracle, involving a Brazilian boy who was allegedly healed of a pancreatic birth defect after his mother prayed to Acutis.

Agbonkhanmeh Orobator, dean of the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University, said he was "delighted by the news of Carlo Acutis's canonization," noting that he recently visited a diocese in California where young people go on pilgrimage and carry out community service in honor of Acutis.

"His canonization demonstrates that being young is not a barrier to holiness, but being young is a gift to the Church and to the world," Orobator said.

Howler monkeys dropping dead from trees in Mexico's brutal heat

BY MARÍA LUISA PAÚL

In southern Mexico, the deep and raspy roars of howler monkeys reverberate through the lush jungles enveloping the city of Comalcalco. The sound — akin to the rumble of distant thunder or the grumble of a large engine — usually crescendos around dawn and dusk, signaling to residents the beginning and end of each day.

But those booming, guttural growls have grown fainter in recent weeks as at least 147 monkeys have died amid excessive heat raging in the states of Tabasco and Chiapas, Comalcalco-based veterinarian Víctor Morato said.

In Comalcalco, where temperatures have topped 113 degrees, residents have stumbled upon the corpses of monkeys "that dropped dead from the trees," Morato said — sometimes, as many as 10 bodies at a time. Other primates that were found still clinging to life have been rushed to Morato's animal hospital, where he immediately hooks them to IV drips with electrolytes.

"It's the saddest thing to have them stretch out their little hands to you as if to say, 'Please help me, I'm dying,'" Morato told The Washington Post. "And more heartbreaking yet is to think that we humans have contributed to this disaster."

Over the past year, an ongoing and severe drought has parched most of Mexico, draining reservoirs and leaving parts of the country grappling with an acute water crisis. Since mid-March, scorching temperatures have led to at least 26 heat-related deaths, according to the nation's health ministry. The double-whammy of weather phenomena, scientists have warned, is aggravated by climate change — which alters usual weather patterns and results in longer and hotter periods with less rain.

Across Tabasco and Chiapas, the effects of drought and excessive heat are compounded by the region's worsening deforestation, forest fires and logging, wildlife biologist Gilberto Pozo said. Those factors combined, he said, have led to howler monkeys being deprived of the food, water and shade they need to survive.

The resulting monkey deaths began on May 4 and seem to have peaked last weekend, said Pozo, who is a researcher at the Tabasco-based conservation organization Cobiús, which stands for Biodiversity Conservation of the Usumacinta, a region that stretches between Mexico and Guatemala.

"Everything that could go wrong here essentially did — all these things came together, and the monkeys just couldn't take it anymore," Pozo said. "This is a dire warning that human activities have consequences, which can be fatal for biodiversity and, in this



A veterinarian holds a Yucatán black howler monkey rescued from the jungle amid a fierce heat wave, in Cunduacán, Mexico.

case, for a species that is in danger of extinction."

Howler monkeys, known as saraguatos, are crucial for the tropical rainforests that cover most of southern Mexico, Pozo said. The primates' role as one of the ecosystem's top seed dispersers is incredibly effective — albeit purely accidental. Because of their steady diet of fruit, howler monkeys carry seeds in their bellies while traveling across the jungle.

Once the monkeys defecate, those seeds land on the ground and eventually turn into the huge trees blanketing the region. This process, Pozo said, promotes biodiversity and healthy forest growth.

In addition to serving as the jungle's gardeners, howler monkeys have been an icon of Mexican culture for centuries. The Maya — a civilization that spanned much of Central America and southern Mexico for hundreds of years — revered the howler monkey as a mischievous deity and the patron of artisans, musicians and scribes. In the Aztec Empire, monkeys symbolized joy and had a day dedicated to them.

Despite the primates' significance, its population has been dwindling for decades — mainly due to habitat destruction, disease and hunting. The International Union for Conservation of Nature, the world's top wildlife-monitoring group, has classified the Mexican subspecies of howler monkey as endangered since 2003 — and warned that 31 percent of its suitable habitat could be lost by 2048.

The new, blistering heat is "not helping — not at all," Pozo said.

Over the past week, nonprofits, researchers and civil organizations have called on the Mexican government to do more to save the monkeys — and complained about what a local association of zoologists and conservationists, Azcarm, called "the total absence" of federal institutions.

Mexico's environmental agency, SEMARNAT, "has not taken a true leadership role in this emer-

gency," Azcarm said in a statement, adding that a "contingency plan is urgently needed."

In a statement, a SEMARNAT spokesperson said the agency is making "a coordinated effort to address this issue," and referred The Post to its previous news releases. In one from Monday, SEMARNAT said investigators are conducting necropsies to determine what's causing the monkeys' deaths, adding that "federal, state and municipal authorities were working in coordination with the academic sector and zoos in the region."

For now, community members in Comalcalco are trying to help the monkeys however they can, Morato said. They're walking for miles in search of bodies, leaving buckets of water and fruit in the jungle, and rushing those with heat-related illnesses to Morato's office.

So far, Morato said, he's cared for eight howler monkeys, including a senile male, an orphaned baby and a young mother who appears to have lost her young. The three — Bernabé, Songo and Monina, respectively — are named after Cuban star Celia Cruz's hit song "Burundanga."

All the monkeys, Morato added, have arrived with blistering fevers and are dehydrated and bruised. Thankfully, he said, "We haven't lost any of them yet" — something he attributes to the electrolytes, strawberry Ensure drinks and fresh mangos his team provides.

Despite the urgency, the vet tries to focus on the hopeful moments — like on Sunday, when he and several volunteers released Monina and Songo, her adopted child, back into the wild. The group placed two plastic carriers by the foot of a tall, winding tree. Cheers erupted after each monkey quickly climbed the tree's trunk.

"I think they're going to pull through," Morato said. "As long as there are people with good hearts, I'll still have hope that we can save this species."

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

“There is a sense among consumers that they can shop more cheaply elsewhere.”

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData

Grocers are finally lowering prices as shoppers pull back

Retailers Target, Walmart and Aldi have begun reducing prices on food and household staples

BY JACLYN PEISER

Consumers have been grumbling about the soaring cost of groceries for nearly two years. Now, some of the biggest names in retail appear to be listening.

In recent weeks, Target and Aldi have broadcast price cuts on thousands of items, while Walmart unveiled a new private label lineup of quality “chef-inspired food” mostly in the \$5-and-under range. The shift comes as U.S. consumers have been signaling their discontent with more subdued spending — threatening retailers’ bottom lines.

It also reflects the split screen that is the U.S. economy: technically strong, but a struggle for many consumers as inflation and interest rates remain elevated, and debt levels have soared. Grocery prices have spiked nearly 27 percent since 2020, outpacing overall inflation. Combined with higher housing and energy costs, Americans have developed an increasingly dour outlook about their financial well-being in the run-up to the 2024 election.

Retailers have taken note, said Coresight Research analyst Bryan Goldenberg. They’re “trying to get back to growth.”

This week, Target announced it would lower prices on roughly 5,000 items, including staples such as milk, produce, bread and coffee, as well as diapers and pet food. The reductions will “collectively save consumers millions of dollars this summer,” the company said in a news release.

The White House — which has been pressing retailers to lower prices — took credit for the rollbacks, posting on X: “President Biden called on grocery chains making record profits to lower prices for consumers — and they’re answering the call.”

Since the pandemic, the major chains have been operating at the highest profit margins on groceries in two decades, according to a study by the White House Council of Economic Advisers. An array of federal regulators, Democratic lawmakers and think tanks contend that large retailers have kept prices artificially high, allegedly through coercive tactics like price fixing and price gouging, and industry consolidation.

Wyatt Williams of Iowa City says higher prices forced him to make changes starting in 2022, the year inflation reached a four-decade high of 9.1 percent. The 39-year-old writer and professor could no longer afford to make his weekly shopping trip to Whole Foods. Instead, he found a creative alternative: driving 30 minutes away to a Mennonite-owned bulk goods grocery store in rural Iowa.

“My finances were wrecked, and I was cutting into my savings,” he said. “Something that’s interesting that happens with food is when you have to regard it with scarcity, it changes the way

you cook.”

Target’s rollback is partly a response to customers like Williams finding more economical alternatives for household staples. Target chief growth officer Christina Henington told investors Wednesday during the company’s first-quarter earnings call that the company is passing savings back to customers in part to “accelerate traffic and unit growth over time.”

The Minneapolis-based retailer reported a 3.2 percent decline in sales, exceeding its counterparts, a sign it is losing market share, according to industry analysts. Target has been wounded the most in its discretionary categories as its usual shopper prioritizes affording groceries over impulse purchases in the home goods aisle.

“From our data, Target has lost some customers and share in grocery and particularly in household products,” said Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData. “There is a sense among consumers that they can shop more cheaply elsewhere. . . . This dynamic partly explains why Target is investing more in value by reducing prices on key items.”

Aldi, the fastest-growing grocery chain in the country, announced a similar move earlier this month. The privately held German company said it is cutting prices on 250 items. Aldi’s move will have a more noticeable impact for shoppers than at Target since it has far fewer items on its shelves, Goldenberg said.

Walmart, which has acquired new, higher-end customers looking to trade down on groceries, household essentials and general merchandise, is making moves to keep the customers coming back. The Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer reported last week that net sales for Walmart U.S. rose 4.6 percent in the first quarter year-over-year.

The nation’s largest retailer announced earlier this month that it is rolling out more than 300 new products under its new private label Bettergoods. The products, spanning 15 categories, keep up with the latest food trends and are plant-based and gluten-free, as well as “cleaner” foods made without artificial flavors, colorings or added sugars. The items range from about \$2 to \$15, with more than 70 percent of them under \$5.

Though retailers are eager to highlight cost-saving measures, critics view them as a significant source of rising costs. While prices rose during the pandemic because of a mixture of labor shortages, rising fuel costs, international conflicts, supply chain disruptions, droughts, disease and more, Lindsay Owens, the executive director of economic policy think tank Groundwork Collaborative, said price gouging and industry consolidation played major roles.



ISTOCK

Major chains have had the highest profit margins on groceries in two decades, a White House Council of Economic Advisers study found.



JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: Signs promote lower prices at a Target store in Miami on Monday.

LEFT: Discount grocer Aldi, which has been expanding rapidly in the United States, announced plans to reduce prices on 250 items.



ANNA DRIVER/REUTERS

“It’s really clear when you start looking at industry and corporate firm-level data . . . that companies are really expanding their margins during a period when their own costs are rising,” Owens said. “What you see is that’s

effectively made possible by companies who are passing along their rising costs in full but then going for more.”

Meanwhile, consumers have gone into debt to afford groceries. According to an analysis from

Urban Institute, a Washington think tank that conducts economic and social policy research, many families tapped credit cards, payday loans, savings and Buy Now, Pay Later services to afford essentials. The Institute

found that 7.1 percent of those who used a credit card did not have enough money to make the minimum payment.

Consolidation up and down the supply chain, and among the major chains, is another contributing factor. Grocery store numbers have fallen 30 percent in the past 25 years. And more than a third of the U.S. grocery sales come from four retailers. Walmart alone has nearly a quarter of the market, Owens said. The lack of competition gives these retailers more leeway to raise prices, said Federal Trade Commissioner Alvaro Bedoya.

“One effect of consolidation is to allow big players to make money not because they’re efficient but because they’re powerful,” he said in an interview with The Washington Post. “Another thing that’s happened is that these supply chains have become externally brittle.”

The FTC’s study on the grocery supply chain during the pandemic found that major retailers leveraged their size and influence to dictate what they pay to suppliers. This allowed large chains to grow profits, gains that didn’t trickle down to consumers.

Owens, who on Wednesday spoke before a panel of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, also noted that technology and data collection are being used to raise prices.

“Technological innovations such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and surveillance targeting have enabled companies to collect reams of data on their competitors and their customers,” Owens said in her testimony. “They can use this data to facilitate collusion and price fixing or simply to accelerate their ability to hike prices and maximize profits.”

Abha Bhattarai contributed to this report.

DIGEST

TECHNOLOGY

Judge weighs changes to Google’s app store

Google confronted the latest in a succession of legal attacks on its digital empire Thursday as a federal judge began to address anticompetitive practices in the app market for smartphones powered by its Android software.

The San Francisco court hearing before U.S. District Judge James Donato came five months after a nine-person jury decided Google had turned its Play Store for Android phone apps into an illegal monopoly following a four-week trial in an antitrust case brought by Epic Games, the maker of Fortnite. At the start of the hearing, Donato told lawyers for both

parties not to revisit the jury’s verdict, which is now “carved in stone.”

The verdict has given Epic a chance to persuade Donato to impose sweeping restrictions and other changes on how Google manages the distribution of Android apps. Under Epic’s key proposals, Google would be required to make all Android apps in the Play Store available to competing stores — and also distribute rival app stores directly to consumers who want to download them.

— Associated Press

STOCKS

Dell hits record high amid rally in AI stocks

Shares of Dell Technologies hit

a record high Friday amid a rally in companies working on generative artificial intelligence applications, buoyed by strong optimism for the new technology.

AI-heavyweight Nvidia posted strong quarterly results and forecast current-quarter revenue above Wall Street expectations Wednesday, reinforcing that customers’ spending on generative AI will continue to be strong. The momentum extended to Dell, which has recently launched AI-oriented personal computers and more powerful servers in collaboration with Nvidia.

Dell shares rose 6 percent to \$162.82 after paring some gains in the afternoon and were on track to add \$6.6 billion to its market value.

— Reuters

Workday shares sink as hiring slows down

Workday shares dropped more than 13 percent Friday after the human resources software provider pared back its annual subscription revenue forecast as economic uncertainty and slower hiring hurt demand for its payroll services.

Firms have slowed hiring as they navigate pressures from higher-for-longer interest rates and sticky inflation.

Workday is projected to lose about \$9 billion in market value.

U.S. job growth slowed more than expected in April, and the increase in annual wages had fallen below 4 percent for the first time in nearly three years.

— Reuters

ALSO IN BUSINESS

Citigroup has asked its 600 U.S. employees who are eligible to work remotely to return to office full-time

as regulatory requirements make it hard for Wall Street banks to allow off-site work for roles such as trading. Regulators had eased some requirements to allow traders the flexibility of remote work during the pandemic. But in the coming weeks, the primary watchdog for U.S. brokerage firms and exchange markets, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (Finra), is set to bring back pre-pandemic rules to monitor workplaces.

Eli Lilly will spend more than \$5 billion to expand an Indiana manufacturing site and

eventually make more doses of its popular weight-loss and diabetes treatments, Zepbound and Mounjaro. The drugmaker said Friday that it was more than doubling its investment in a site near its Indianapolis headquarters, but that it will take time for the location to start producing.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) union is seeking a new election at a Mercedes-Benz plant in Alabama after losing a vote there last week, according to a petition filed Friday with the National Labor Relations Board. The union accused Mercedes in the filing of engaging “in a relentless anti-union campaign,” including the firing of employees who were pro-union.

— From news services

FREE FOR ALL

Correct protest language

Regarding the May 15 news article “Year’s end marked by smaller ceremonies at Columbia”:

The Post’s use of the term “pro-Palestinian” can make people think protesters are anti-Israeli or anti-Jewish. That is not true.

Please describe these students as anti-genocide, because that is the truth.

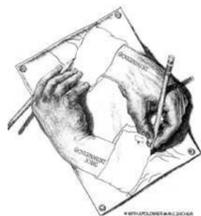
Mary Kirby, Chicago

There’s no dearth of suffering, so acknowledge it

It is remarkable that the May 6 letters package, “Four Columbia students reflect on campus life in the midst of protest,” which was focused on the suffering of Gazans, contained not a mention of Hamas, the Oct. 7 slaughter of parents and children in front of each other, rape, hostages, human and hospital shields, underground tunnels, or Hamas’s bombardment by rocket fire of a humanitarian aid checkpoint the day before the letters were published.

Adam Cohen, Potomac

Another reason to be up in arms



MICHAEL RAMIREZ/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The May 7 editorial cartoon

Michael Ramirez’s May 7 editorial cartoon, “A never-ending cycle,” copied M.C. Escher’s artwork “Drawing Hands” (with “apologies” to Escher as a credit). Escher emphatically rejected a letter from the Rolling Stones’ Mick Jagger, requesting a drawing for an album cover. My opinion is he would not appreciate Ramirez’s use of his work, either. But what was Ramirez’s point?

I am unaware of President Biden making a dramatic increase in civil service employees. I guess Ramirez was satirizing aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. As most of that money buys weapons and ammunition made in the United States to send to foreign destinations, this circle provides profit for U.S. arms manufacturers and jobs for Americans, which I thought were conservative ideals. What’s not to like, Mr. Ramirez?

Bruce Krebs, Arlington

Children are a gift. Know what they take.

Regarding the May 10 letters package, “What’s the ‘ideal’ number of kids? Somewhere between zero and 10.,” in response to Timothy P. Carney’s May 6 op-ed, “The ideal number of kids in a family: Four (at a minimum)”:

I was alarmed and disappointed by the number of letters advocating large families. All but one of these letters were based on emotional arguments. Only one pointed out that it takes time, energy and money to raise a child. It also takes a healthy adult, preferably more than one, and health includes mental and emotional health.

But more importantly, we live on a planet with finite resources, which are already stretched to the limit.

Rosemary Killen, Silver Spring

Not the right wing

I’m glad The Post published David I. Sommers’s May 11 Free for All letter, “What’s the story?,” which called out the silliness in publishing the May 2 Style article “Trumpworld’s Looming presence,” a long profile of Laura Loomer. The Post has amplified a long string of noxious Donald Trump hangers-on; shall we expect Charlie Kirk or Tim Pool next? I don’t get why The Post focuses on right-wingers. Readers aren’t into them, and the left has influencers who are more interesting and more intelligent, and doing good things instead of trying to tear the country apart. As for people on the right, Tim Miller, Rick Wilson and others are trying to bring the world back to sanity, but The Post ignores them also.

Susan Wallace, Washington

The vast world of two-wheelers

As a reporter for 40 years myself (now retired from the Milwaukee Journal and its successor, the Journal Sentinel), I am an admirer of The Post for its customary accuracy. That’s why it’s so jarring to repeatedly read that editors there don’t get it when it comes to powered two-wheelers.

They are almost always described as “moped” or “mopeds,” as if the term were a generic for any motorized two-wheeler. But a moped is a very specific type of two-wheeler — a bicycle with its pedals and a small motor to provide an assist to the rider, hence the term “moped” for motorized with pedals. Other types are motorcycles, from small 50cc models all the way up to huge Harley-Davidson two- and three-wheelers; motorbikes, similar to mopeds but without the pedals, and motor scooters, which have smaller wheels and allow the operator to sit chair-like with feet on the floor and not astride as on motorcycles and horses.

These are very different vehicles. And when stories such as the May 1 Metro article “D.C. bill would require registration for mopeds” doesn’t make the distinction clear until the sixth paragraph, they do readers a disservice.

Frank A. Aukofer, Falls Church

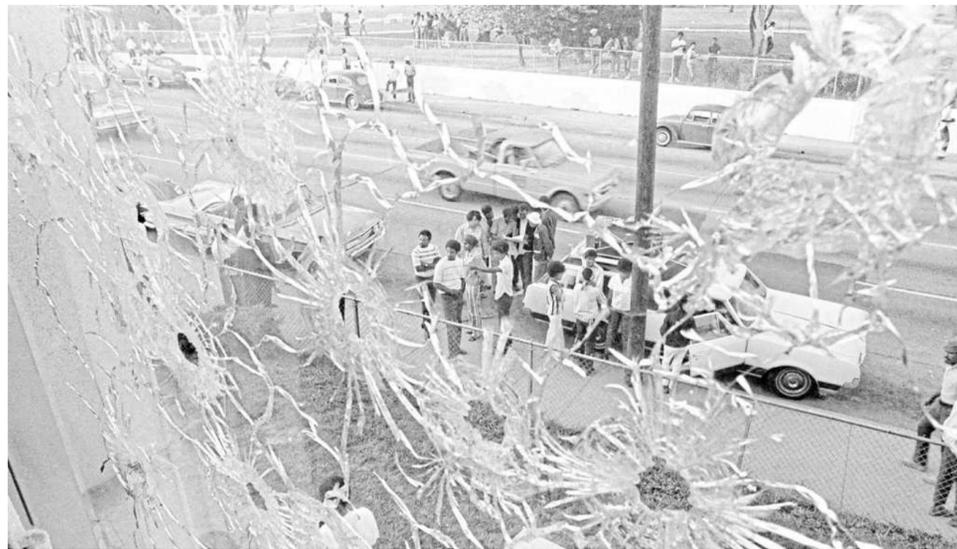
Tough buying a home now? Try being a woman in the ‘70s.

I enjoyed reading the April 28 Business article “Buying a house?” about the struggles home shoppers face in the current economy.

It was interesting to see how differently each person did their research and evaluated what would be a good match for them at this time in their lives. These are success stories that many people can learn from and relate to.

The challenges the subjects of this article faced reminded me of how I worked to buy a first home and later, after a divorce, fought to keep my home as we divided our property. Try refinancing as a woman in the early 1970s when banks did not like giving loans to women!

Nanci Link, Washington



The bullet-riddled windows of a women’s dormitory at Jackson State College in Jackson, Miss., on May 15, 1970.

Remember the Jackson State killings

Recent Post pieces, including the May 5 front-page article “Applying the lessons of tragic legacy” and Brian VanDeMark’s April 28 Opinion essay, “At Kent State, a tragedy precipitated by politicians,” have noted the May 4, 1970, Kent State massacre. It would be fitting to pay due attention to the May 15, 1970, Jackson State killings. In about 30 seconds, law

enforcement fired about 400 bullets or pieces of buckshot on the campus in Jackson, Miss. Two Black students were killed, and 12 were injured. Memorable photographs captured a bullet-riddled campus building. It looked like a war zone. Jackson State should be remembered.

Steve Young, Arlington

Leave partisanship out of voting reform

The May 4 news article “Rift with Trump over election claims leads to top RNC lawyer’s resignation” described former Republican Party attorney Charlie Spies as “fiercely critical of Democratic efforts to change voting rules in advance of the 2020 election.”

By calling efforts to change voting rules “Democratic,” The Post gave credence to the false claim by former president Donald Trump and others that Democrats stole the 2020 election. In truth, these efforts were focused on reducing the need for in-person voting amid the covid-19 pandemic.

Because of the timing of the primaries and the demographics of the pandemic’s hot spots, proposed changes to voting rules tended to focus on large polling places in urban centers, and as such were more likely to be enacted in “blue” states by Democratic politicians. This led Republicans to oppose the changes for partisan reasons.

However, by the time the general election took place, the pandemic’s hot spots had shifted to more rural areas, whose voters were less likely to have or take advantage of alternate voting options, and experts believe Republicans might have lost some rural votes because they followed Spies’s partisan response rather than the science.

David Kinyon, Minneapolis



A homeless encampment along the banks of the Seine River.

France’s ‘Olympic movement’ is necessary and humane

The May 12 Sports article “Olympic movement” negatively described Paris’s efforts to remove homeless encampments in areas where the Olympics will be held this summer. It also criticized Vancouver, which “cracked down on jaywalking, street vending and public urination” before the 2010 Winter Olympics. What is wrong with a city enforcing laws against those actions, even if there is no Olympics pending? The article went on to reprimand France for moving many of the refugees in Paris’s encampments to apartment

houses in other cities while their asylum claims are processed. It would be more appropriate to praise France for trying to help the refugees achieve legal immigration status.

The Olympics are for promoting friendly relations among the citizens of many countries, including countries that are otherwise hostile to one another. This goal should not be diminished by having the Olympic venue include homeless encampments.

Edward Tabor, Bethesda



Robin Givhan interviews fashion designer Christian Siriano in 2017.

Long live The Post’s brilliant women

Robin Givhan’s May 11 The Critique column, “With precision and simplicity, Stormy Daniels bruises Trump’s careful image,” masterfully summarized what Daniels’s testimony in Donald Trump’s hush money trial accomplished: exposing the man for what he is.

It took a humble woman from Louisiana, armed with the truth of her story, to finally pierce the veneer of Bible huckster Teflon Don. I believe Jesus would have respected Daniels for her honesty, tenacity and courage. Kudos to Daniels and Givhan.

Bernadette Koontz, Whiting, N.J.

During World War II, U.S. submarines returning to port would sometimes display an inverted broom from the conning tower, advertising a successful mission. All engaged targets had been sunk.

In her May 12 op-ed, “If you have nothing nice to say, let’s be friends,” Kathleen Parker posted her own clean sweep. She fired from the hip, over the shoulder and between the legs into her “target-rich environment,” and my score sheet says they were all hits: campus protesters, a porn queen, everyone’s favorite piñata and his most pathetic wannabe-VP sycophants.

If you can’t be Parker’s friend, you don’t want to be her enemy.

William A. McCollam, Fairfax

As a longtime devotee of Post commentary, I’ve grieved when favorite columnists, such as Michael Gerson, have died. And I pray that Dana Milbank, Eugene Robinson and other men have enduring, happy careers. But, my God, long live the cranky women! Let’s petition the “frat bros” Kathleen Parker mentioned for some of their \$500,000 kegger money. I’d use it on a massive, raucous soirée at a literary spot — say, the Library of Congress’s Main Reading Room — to honor Parker, Robin Givhan, Anne Lamott, Sally Jenkins, Monica Hesse and Alexandra Petri. For flowers, maybe Queen Anne’s lace, a pretty weed “blossomed into a field,” as Givhan described Stormy Daniels’s testimony. Laughter would blossom, too, “the Dippity-Do of the spiritual life, jiggy at first and then holding us firmly” [Lamott, “Lifelong lessons in coping with fear and humiliation,” Tuesday Opinion, May 7]. We’ll have no “clumsy third-rate comics, whose hammy punchlines” fall “like refrigerators hitting sidewalks” [Jenkins, “Brady roast was misogynistic, cruel and unbearably unfunny,” Sports, May 8]. No “throwing chairs at each other, like guests on Jerry Springer” [Hesse, “In Congress, brawls not reserved for the men,” Style, May 18]. And no brain worms invited, “currently under indictment” or not [Petri, “I’m RFK Jr.’s brain worm, and I’m asking for your vote,” op-ed, May 12].

Phyllis Windle, College Park

Wording challenges

I read with great interest Adam Higginbotham’s May 5 Opinions essay, “The space shuttle that never came home,” which detailed that fateful day in January 1986 when Challenger exploded shortly after takeoff, taking the lives of seven crew. But nowhere in that excellent historical account did I find an opinion, unless one considers the use of the noun “mandarins” in reference to NASA’s senior managers to be opinionated. I had to research its etymology to appreciate that the word, coined by the Portuguese to describe public officials in Imperial China, has many meanings. Was the author insinuating that NASA managers were powerful bureaucrats who tend to make things complicated? Or perhaps respected cultural or academic figures? No definition of that word describes the NASA engineering management I’ve encountered in my four decades of service within NASA.

The risk assessment that cold day in 1986, culminating in the decision to launch, focused on the danger posed by the impact of ice, shaken from the launch vehicle and tower, on the fragile thermal tiles, as well as the compromised integrity of the O-ring seals in the segmented solid rocket boosters. The latter brought down Challenger. Seventeen years later, in February 2003, the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon reentry, again taking the lives of seven crew, because of damage to the thermal tiles sustained at launch by a falling chunk of insulation shaken from the spacecraft. In both cases, the failure modes were well known to the engineers as well as management. And in both cases, NASA’s formal accident investigation reports described the intense pressure brought to bear on management to maintain schedule. Challenger was lost because it was operated under environmental conditions well beyond those it was designed and tested to. Perhaps there was no saving Columbia after the damage it was suspected to have sustained at launch, but the management decision not to inspect the spacecraft for damage in flight was also driven by a desire to maintain schedule. That was the true root cause of both bad decisions.

Jack Connerney, Annapolis, Md.

Where were the skeptics?

I strongly object to the May 3 Style article “The children who remember.” It is one thing to publish an article on belief in past lives and the people who promote it. That is news.

However, this article not only wandered into but totally immersed itself in a credulous endorsement of something that, frankly, is the stuff of tabloids. The headline alone was objectionable. It suggested that children really do remember their past lives, which presupposes that they really had past lives. In reality, there is absolutely no solid evidence for anything of the sort. To have it presented as if it were fact was jarring.

I am old enough to remember the repressed memory cases of the 1980s and ‘90s, in which preschool teachers were hauled into court based on children’s descriptions of satanic rituals involving sex and witches flying on broomsticks. There is a very similar whiff of something ugly with the people encouraging very young children to recount horrific stories involving Holocaust victims, dead World War II pilots, etc.

A degree of skepticism is always appropriate in journalism, especially in extraordinary cases such as this.

Stacy Spencer, Alexandria

OPINION

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

How not to fix the border

ONCE AGAIN, Washington made a show of doing nothing about the country's broken immigration system — except to try to score political points. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) on Thursday brought to a vote the bipartisan border security deal that members of both parties agreed upon in February — and that Republican senators ultimately rejected after Donald Trump said its passage would help President Biden.

The bill failed to pass, again, for the same reason. Mr. Schumer resubmitted it to remind Americans of Republicans' cynicism: refusing to do anything to fix the border so they can continue using it to pummel Mr. Biden. Yet Mr. Schumer's maneuvering was also a political ploy, an attempt to shift the blame for an immigration mess that most Americans believe is out of control.

Washington needs to craft a better system to manage the mass migration of people seeking asylum in the United States, as migrants request U.S. protection at massive rates, knowing that the process for vetting their claims will drag out. That requires, above all, clear standards to determine who is entitled to protection that are enforced swiftly and certainly. Otherwise, they will not be credible. The bipartisan bill would have done some

good in this respect. But its backers vastly oversold what it could accomplish.

Consider its provision to "shut the border" amid large surges of asylum seekers. There is a close precedent: Title 42, the rule deployed during the covid-19 pandemic, from March 2020 until May 2023, to summarily expel migrants on public health grounds without hearing their asylum applications. Trump adviser Stephen Miller said it could be invoked again to keep out "severe strains of the flu" or "scabies."

Three million people were expelled under the rule. But it didn't stop the flow. Border Patrol encounters with migrants increased sharply, largely because, under Title 42, they didn't face consequences for repeat illegal entries, including criminal prosecution. So those kicked out would turn around and try again, hoping to sneak through undetected. Recidivists rose from 7 percent of encounters in the fiscal 2019 to 27 percent in 2021. Unauthorized migrants whom U.S. agents detected but failed to catch — "gotaways" in Border Patrol parlance — also soared as migrants kept trying until they made it.

That was hardly the only glitch. Washington soon discovered it couldn't apply Title 42 to everyone showing up at the border because often there was nowhere to send people back to. Overall,

only 41 percent of those encountered at the border were expelled using the rule. The United States could expel single adults coming from Mexico and Central America, because Mexico would accept them. But countries such as Venezuela, Cuba and China would not take back their citizens. Only 8 percent of single adults not from Central America or Mexico got kicked out under Title 42.

Beyond political showmanship, "fixing" the border requires sending a credible signal around the world that the United States can enforce its rules. Today, it can't. The country doesn't have the agents to conduct interviews to find out whether migrants meet the standard to request asylum, the judges to rule on whether asylum is warranted, or enough beds to house migrants until these things are determined.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, for instance, reports 1.3 million immigrants scattered around the country who have been denied permission to stay and face removal orders. ICE cannot detain 1.3 million people — it has only 40,000 beds. Nor can it deport them quickly, even if their home country would take them back. It has 11 planes.

The job should be easy for a Border Patrol agent facing, say, a single Colombian man caught crossing the border illegally. The man is healthy. He doesn't express fear of being sent back. And

Colombia accepts deportation flights from the United States. Except, oops, ICE flies only two deportation plane loads a week to Colombia, and they depart from Harlingen, Tex., and Alexandria, La. Will there be a free seat on a plane? Can the man be sent there in time for the next flight? Is there space to house him until his deportation flight takes off? If any one of the answers is no, chances are the agent will release said Colombian with a notice to appear before an immigration judge — probably several years in the future. Most migrants caught by the Border Patrol get one of those. Requiring that Colombian men meet a tougher standard to be granted asylum will not change this pattern.

To be fair, the bipartisan Senate deal included provisions to boost the credibility of the United States' rules. It would have funded more than 4,300 new asylum officers and support staff, 100 additional immigration judge teams, 1,500 Border Patrol agents and customs officers, and 1,200 ICE staff to help with deportations. It would have increased detention capacity and added deportation flights.

This, but at a grander scale, would offer the best shot at bringing the border under control. After the political skirmishing is done, lawmakers ought to work on a solution.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Seniors deserve to be safe. A lack of transparency stands in the way.

Regarding The Post's May 17 front-page article "Senior-care referral site stays quiet about neglect":

The Post's reporting concerning the website A Place for Mom and the ways its ratings fail to account for reports of neglect of some residents of senior care homes touches on only some of the issues for older Americans in these places. Even before families start comparing care facilities, they should ask themselves this important question: Is it really better for seniors to spend their final years in nursing homes? Or would they be better off receiving support in their homes and communities?

The end of my mother's life in a senior living community convinced me that the second option is better. She initially enjoyed meeting new people, taking classes, eating dinner in the restaurants and walking with her walker for exercise. But after her move to nursing care after a fall, which staff at our facility told us was caused when an electric wheelchair driven by another resident collided with her, she declined rapidly. We once found her naked in a bed, moving uncontrollably. On other occasions, she was sitting in a wheelchair staring into space. She didn't recognize her children and didn't seem to know where she was; it was as if the experience and the medications she was proscribed had altered her personality. The experience was painful for all of us.

Now that I am 65, I get fliers and emails from that same facility, trying to persuade me to move there. Instead of responding, I devote time to helping a Fairfax organization that helps seniors stay in their own homes, whether by helping them with transportation and home maintenance or by working to make sure seniors don't become socially isolated. And I plan to stay in my home till the end, too.

Kathleen Rushlow, Fairfax Station

My bright and healthy 100-year-old father-in-law and I often discuss the news. You can imagine how amazing it is to hear the viewpoint of someone who has lived through so much history. Recently, when we swapped recommendations for Post articles, I suggested he read one on Malaysia and the South China Sea and he offered up The Post's piece on A Place for Mom, saying how terrible the agency sounded.

When I finished the article, the first thing I thought of was my own experience helping find suitable situations for three parents, including my father-in-law.

It's an emotional time and having help with some of the administrative legwork is valuable. I have used A Place for Mom all three times. They were wonderful each time and I have and will continue to recommend them. They were compassionate, professional and responsive, and I don't think they ever crossed the line to pushing any particular placement.

I fully understood they were a resourcer, paid by the companies I would be getting on the list. This is the same model employed by Angi and other pay-to-play agencies. The list from A Place for Mom saved me hours of initial research. I could supplement with any places that seemed to be missing and then it was up to me to do my own on-the-ground research.

I called the candidates, visited, asked friends, neighbors and family about their experiences with the different options, showed up unexpectedly and during mealtime to see what the service was really like. A Place for Mom gave me a starting point; I did the rest.

Last I checked, there were nearly 44 million unpaid caregivers in the United States — and more every day. We can use all the help we can get.

Martha Behrend, Fairfax

Regarding The Post's May 20 Metro article "Nursing home residents sue in Md.":

The lack of oversight of Maryland nursing homes

DRAWING BOARD



WALT HANDELSMAN/THE ADVOCATE/TIMES-PICTAYUNE



HORSEY/SEATTLE TIMES

is horrific and shameful, but not altogether surprising. The state agency responsible for oversight, the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), has a long history of failing to implement, monitor or enforce health-care laws, whether at the state or federal level. For example, when the Hospital Patient's Bill of Rights unanimously passed the Maryland General Assembly in 2019, advocates and Maryland had assumed that the new law would be implemented; five years later, we're still waiting for patients to be consistently informed of their rights and for evidence that hospitals are training their staff on what those rights are.

The reason is that OHCQ will only respond to complaints, instead of affirmatively monitoring hospital compliance. This reckless policy has spilled over to the lack of monitoring of nursing homes as well.

Maryland desperately needs a responsible and competent health-care regulatory agency to implement and enforce our health laws, which are designed to protect vulnerable patients in both nursing homes as well as hospitals. Until that occurs, Maryland will continue to rank nationally as the worst in emergency room wait time, among

the worst in hospital patient satisfaction and, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the second-worst in nursing home oversight.

Anna Palmisano, Rockville
The writer is the director of Marylanders for Patient Rights.

Last month, President Biden's administration for the first time imposed minimum staffing requirements on nursing homes. While intended to be a crucial step toward ensuring high-quality patient care and alleviating the burden on health-care professionals, the mandate brings to light a significant challenge: a nationwide shortage of qualified nursing staff amid a rapidly aging population. With more than 10,000 Americans turning 65 each day, the United States will need more than 206,000 additional nurses by 2030, and our current workforce development pipeline is ill-equipped to fill this gap.

To meet this growing demand and comply with the new staffing standards, it is imperative the industry embrace innovative workforce development solutions. Current programs tend to

focus on traditional education and training paths. While these are undoubtedly essential, they are no longer sufficient to meet the rapidly evolving demands of the health-care industry. Recognizing the challenges many people face in accessing opportunity, it is critical that any workforce development program address not only professional development, but also the social determinants that can impede it.

Prospective and current nurses often juggle educational responsibilities with personal obligations, where lack of child care, inadequate transportation and unstable housing can become significant barriers to entering and remaining in the health-care field. To succeed, workforce development programs must extend beyond traditional training to include comprehensive wraparound services such as subsidized child care, transportation vouchers and affordable housing. Person-centered case management is also integral to help students navigate personal and professional challenges while setting and achieving career ladder goals. This type of holistic support will not only help attract more people to the field but also greatly improve program retention and completion.

We must invest in comprehensive and innovative support services to help fill critical positions and build a more resilient, dedicated and diverse nursing workforce that is well-equipped to meet the complex demands of today's health-care landscape.

Barb Clapp, Baltimore
The writer is chief executive of Dwyer Workforce Development, a career training nonprofit.

Spinning wheels

Regarding The Post's May 17 Metro article "Council members seek to revive bike lane project":

As a daily cyclist, the thought of taking Connecticut Avenue using the proposed bike lane route from Calvert Street NW in Woodley Park to Legation Street NW in Chevy Chase feels ill conceived.

As any cyclist will tell you, stopping, starting and waiting takes significantly more time and effort than cruising. Yet there are 28 traffic lights along this Connecticut Avenue corridor. In addition to cross traffic, there are frequent vehicular turns across traffic when lights are green on Connecticut. These pose some of the most significant dangers to cyclists. And cyclists themselves may pose a danger to pedestrians in these areas. Adult workers and retirees are busy walking to Metro stops, stores and appointments, and in many cases have their eyes glued to their phones. Children are walking to school and other activities. They might be aware of large vehicles on the street, but bikes are far less visible and appear quickly.

Why is this effort being considered at all when there is already an excellent parallel commuting route for cyclists: along the Beach Drive bike path in Rock Creek Park? This route has no traffic lights and only two stop signs, both of which are quickly traversed due to very low cross vehicular traffic.

I admire cyclists who use their bikes to commute and run errands. But adding a bike lane to Connecticut Avenue would be a mistake.

John Saunders, Washington

Guest opinion submissions

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Letters can be sent to letters@washpost.com. Submissions must be exclusive to The Post and should include the writer's address and day and evening telephone numbers. Letters are subject to editing and abridgment. Please do not send letters as attachments. Because of the volume of material we receive, we are unable to acknowledge submissions; writers whose letters are under consideration for publication will be contacted.

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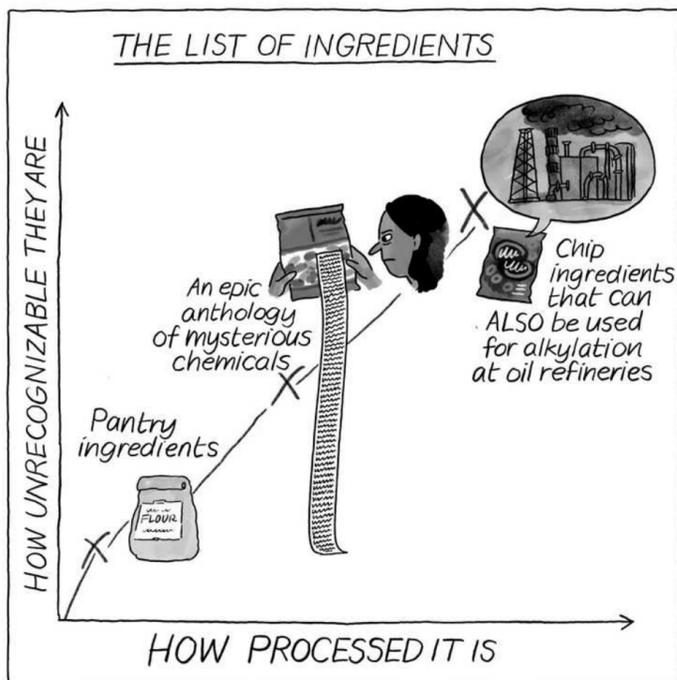
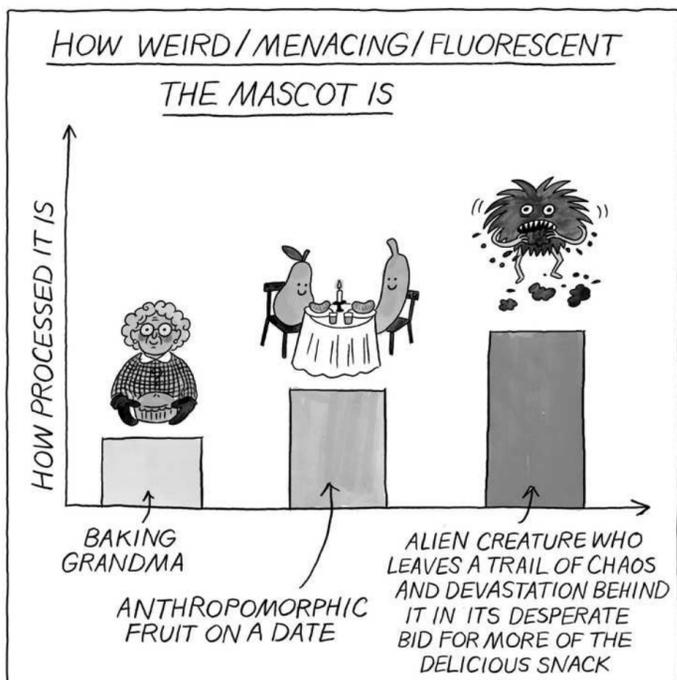
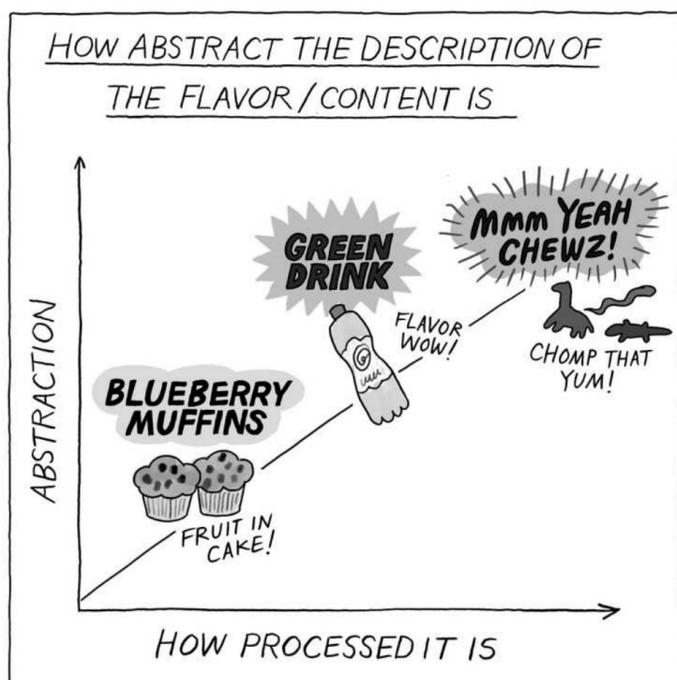
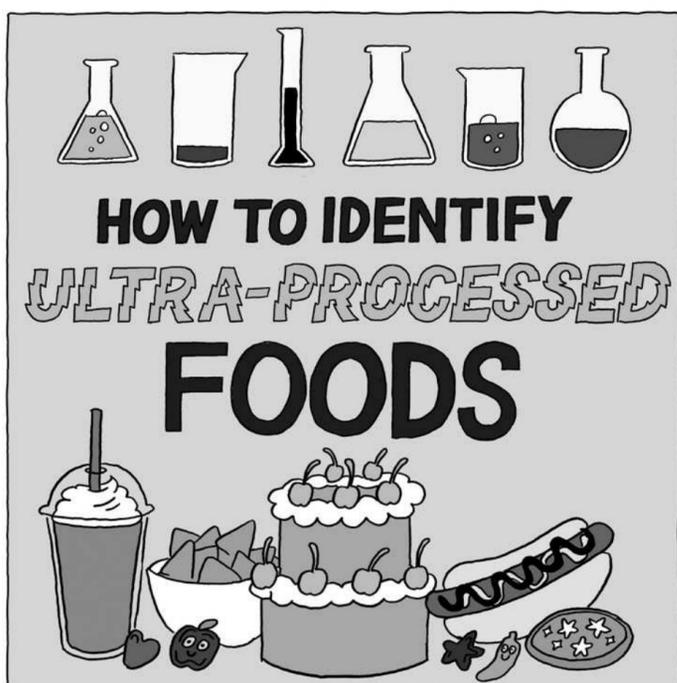
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OPINION

EDITH PRITCHETT



COLBERT I. KING

Vote like Jan. 6 could happen again – because it can

There have been 19 presidential elections in my lifetime. In every one, the losing candidates accepted the results as lawful, with one exception: Donald Trump.

The losing candidates have been nearly equally divided by political party: Thomas E. Dewey (R), 1948; Adlai Stevenson (D), 1952 and 1956; Richard M. Nixon (R), 1960; Barry Goldwater (R), 1964; Hubert Humphrey (D), 1968; George McGovern (D), 1972; Gerald Ford (R), 1976; Jimmy Carter (D), 1980; Walter F. Mondale (D), 1984; Michael Dukakis (D), 1988; George H.W. Bush (R), 1992; Bob Dole (R), 1996; Al Gore (D), 2000; John F. Kerry (D), 2004; John McCain (R), 2008; Mitt Romney (R), 2012; Hillary Clinton (D), 2016; and Donald Trump (R), 2020.

Nixon lost the 1960 election to John F. Kennedy by a razor-thin margin, and stories circulated at the time about vote theft in some states. Nixon accepted the results. Just as in 2000, when Gore accepted the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn a ruling by Florida's Supreme Court and halt a recount in the state, thus giving Florida's 25 electoral votes — and the presidency — to George W. Bush.

In 2020, Trump, contending that major fraud had been committed during the election, formally challenged the results — as was his right. But Trump went beyond the law: For more than two months after Election Day, he spread the lie that he had won when it was obvious to any fair-minded person that his claims were false. He still repeats this falsehood.

Special counsel Jack Smith has charged Trump with having conspired to retain power and overturn the legitimate results of the 2020 election by unleashing attacks on Congress on Jan. 6, 2021, that would obstruct the “process of collecting, counting, and certifying the results of the presidential election.”

It's hard to predict when or whether Smith will get to try his case. But we do have an answer to the question of whether Trump has had any success in convincing the American electorate that he won. More than one-third of U.S. adults said in December they believe Joe Biden was not legitimately elected president. Score that as a partial Trump victory.

Trump's campaign of pervasive lying succeeded in eroding public confidence in an election in which

there was no evidence of significant fraud.

Now Trump has embarked on a no-holds-barred attempt to regain the White House — a post he desperately needs to quash federal criminal charges against him, both in the election conspiracy case and in a second prosecution related to his handling of classified information. But he's back on the campaign trail backed by nearly 70 percent of Republicans who are convinced Biden should not have entered the White House in the first place.

Would that were the end of it. Trump is laying the groundwork for a repeat of the 2020 post-election debacle. He has managed to get a swath of the country to believe that Biden can't be reelected without cheating. It follows, at least in the minds of Trump and his supporters, that if he doesn't win in November, the election would have been unfair and its result — Biden's reelection — illegitimate.

And then what? On Jan. 6, 2021, thousands stormed the Capitol because Trump convinced them the election had been stolen. They smashed through doors and windows and disrupted the House and Senate chambers to “Stop the Steal” and obstruct Congress from exercising its constitutional responsibility to certify electoral votes. They failed, thanks to D.C. police and U.S. Capitol officers who put their lives on the line.

But next time? None of this is open to speculation. Trump's false claims that he lost because of fraud *did* prompt his followers to assault the seat of American democracy.

If he does it again, will they do it again? Little wonder two-thirds of Americans fear violence could follow this year's elections should Trump once again lose to Biden.

But that's no reason to lose heart and quake in your boots. Threats of violence are more reason to stand up straight, march to the polls and perform that bedrock duty of a democracy: vote, as has been done in 19 presidential elections during my lifetime. Should that happen, and if many millions of voters show their faith in ballot box and vote for candidates who uphold the core values of liberty, equality and democracy, then Donald Trump may well be handed his greatest defeat of all.

LEANA S. WEN

Another farmworker caught H5N1. What worries me is what comes next.

Health officials on Wednesday announced a new human case of avian flu, the second from presumed cow-to-human transmission and the third-ever H5N1 infection in the United States. Though I agree with their assessment that the risk of bird flu remains low for most Americans, this new case raises questions and concerns.

Here's what we know: The case involves a farmworker in Michigan who was regularly exposed to livestock, including cows infected with avian flu. The person had only mild symptoms, specifically conjunctivitis (or inflammation of the eye), and has recovered.

This course of illness mirrors that of the Texas dairy worker who tested positive last month for H5N1, which is reassuring. In the past, H5N1 has led to severe illness in humans, with a global fatality rate of more than 50 percent, but these cases were mild. The same is true of the instance in 2022 of a man in Colorado who contracted the virus from poultry.

Another reassuring aspect is that the Michigan farmworker was enrolled in what's called an active monitoring program. Nirav D. Shah, principal deputy director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, explained on a call with reporters Wednesday that the worker was being tracked by the state's health department. This person received a daily text message asking if they were experiencing any symptoms. After acknowledging some eye redness, the state offered to test them right away.

Such active monitoring is terrific. It allows farmworkers, many of whom normally lack health-care access, a direct line to report symptoms and receive public health guidance.

However, Shah said about 170 people are enrolled in the Michigan program, which seems low. Michigan has 19 farms across nine counties that are known to have H5N1 outbreaks. It's great that active monitoring was successful, but what about workers not in the program?

Another number that stuck out to me during the briefing: About 40 people have been tested for H5N1 since March. Again, this seems low — very low. Especially since avian flu has manifested in the three U.S. cases as mild symptoms, could there be additional human infections that we don't know about because they were never flagged and tested?

Curiously, the Michigan farmworker tested negative via nasal swab, the traditional method used

to detect influenza. The positive test was the result of a conjunctival swab, meaning it was taken by lowering the eyelid and rubbing the swab directly on the eye.

On the one hand, the lack of virus in a nasal swab is good news. A major factor in determining how concerned we should be is how easily the virus spreads. High viral concentrations in someone's nose and mouth increase the likelihood of the virus being spread to others. Though it's certainly possible to spread infections through eye secretions, the transmissibility should not be as high as, for example, the coronavirus, which can be spread simply by breathing and talking.

On the other hand, clinicians need to be extra vigilant. They should follow the guidance from the CDC not only to take the traditional nasopharyngeal swab but also to test the eye. And those exposed to potentially infected cows and poultry should be alert to conjunctivitis as a possible symptom of H5N1.

Federal health leaders stressed that they are hard at work to ensure that treatments and vaccines will be ready to deploy if needed. I agree that we are much better prepared to handle avian flu compared with the start of covid-19. I also agree that this is not the time for most Americans to start changing behaviors, such as avoiding dairy products. After all, the human H5N1 cases thus far have all been in people with direct contact with infected animals. There has been no instance of human-to-human transmission in this outbreak.

What worries me is what comes next. Shah referred to “variable cooperation among farmworkers” in the call and alluded to Michigan being among the states with a more fine-tuned public health response. As avian flu spreads to more herds, the chance of additional human cases increases, requiring more engagement with farms, workers and health departments.

Indeed, Shah advises these entities around the country to “take steps to prepare for the possibility that their jurisdiction, their farm or the workers that they work with, and their organizations may themselves experience a case of H5N1.”

I hope health officials and farms alike will heed this call.

This column is excerpted from Leana S. Wen's Post Opinions newsletter, The Checkup. To sign up, go to wapo.st/checkup-newsletter.



Dairy cows at a farm in Clinton, Maine.

ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

The Washington Post | LIVE

Upcoming Programs



TUES. MAY 28 AT 2:00 P.M.

RACE IN AMERICA: GIVING VOICE

Ryan Alexander Holmes, Actor & Content Creator

Holmes talks about using comedy to explore his Black and Chinese heritage, the many dimensions of identity and his advocacy against anti-Asian hate.



TUES. MAY 28 AT 4:00 P.M.

ELECTION 2024: KEY PLAYERS

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D), Chair, Democratic Governors Association

Walz discusses the nation's most important gubernatorial races, President Biden's reelection campaign and the future of the Democratic Party.



THURS. MAY 30 AT 1:00 P.M.

'FREEDOM ON FIRE'

Evgeny Afineevsky, Director & Producer, "Freedom on Fire"

Oleksii Reznikov, Former Ukrainian Defense Minister

Afineevsky and Reznikov provide an inside look at a new documentary about Ukraine's fight for its survival, Russia's recent military advances and U.S. support for the war-torn country.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



FRI. MAY 31 AT 9:00 A.M.

FIRST LOOK

The Post's **Jonathan Capehart**, **E.J. Dionne** and **Ramesh Ponnuru**

Washington Post Live's "First Look" offers a smart, inside take on the day's politics. Jonathan Capehart hosts a reporter debrief followed by a roundtable discussion with Washington Post columnists.



TUES. JUNE 4 AT 4:00 P.M.

THE NEW SPACE AGE

Christina Koch, NASA Astronaut & Artemis II Mission Specialist

Victor Glover, NASA Astronaut & Artemis II Pilot

Reid Wiseman, NASA Astronaut & Artemis II Commander

Jeremy Hansen, Canadian Space Agency Astronaut & Artemis II Mission Specialist

The four astronauts who make up the team of the first lunar mission in more than 50 years speak about their upcoming historic expedition and the new age of space exploration.



MON. JUNE 10 AT 12:00 P.M.

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

Lisa Bluder, Former Head Women's Basketball Coach, University of Iowa

Bluder reflects on her 40-year coaching career, the Caitlin Clark phenomenon and life after retiring from the Iowa Hawkeyes women's basketball program.



TUES. JUNE 11 AT 11:00 A.M.

THE STATE OF ANTISEMITISM

Deborah E. Lipstadt, Special Envoy to Monitor & Combat Antisemitism

The State Department envoy discusses the global battle against rising antisemitism, her scholarship in Holocaust studies and the lessons history offers for today.

To register for upcoming events and watch recent interviews with Washington Post Live, visit [washingtonpostlive.com](https://www.washingtonpostlive.com) or scan code with a smartphone camera:



8 a.m. 71° Noon 82° 4 p.m. 84° 8 p.m. 79°

 High today at approx. 3 p.m. **85°**

 Precip: 40% Wind: SSE 4-8 mph

THE DISTRICT
 A D.C. police captain was injured in a gunfire incident while in his personal vehicle. **B3**



MARYLAND
 Amid limited funding, public safety is a priority in the \$5.4 billion budget for Prince George's County. **B4**



OBITUARIES
 "Super Size Me" rocketed Morgan Spurlock, 53, to a celebrity later marred by sexual assault claims. **B4**



PHOTOS BY MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST

Their moment onstage finally arrives

College graduations are even sweeter for students whose high school ceremonies were derailed by covid

BY LAUREN LUMPKIN

Chris Provido, 22, was ready. His final class assignment had been submitted. His white button-down and brand-new Lululemon dress pants were crinkle-free. A gold "Honors Program" stole was draped around his neck.

Similar scenes have unfolded at colleges across the country for ages. Students don colorful caps and gowns and sit in neat rows of folding chairs. They line up to walk the stage and shake hands with deans and college presidents while "Pomp and Circumstance" plays in the background.

But this year is different. Provido and thousands of other students in the Class of 2024 are finally getting what they didn't four years ago.

In the spring of 2020, Provido was planning his promposal. He wanted to ask his potential date by standing in front of their high school with a big poster board and a few friends.

And, of course, there was



TOP: Chris Provido practices walking across the stage during a graduation dress rehearsal Thursday at Bowie State University in Bowie, Md. **IN 2020,** his in-person high school ceremony was canceled as the coronavirus spread, leaving him without a sense of closure. **ABOVE:** Provido prepares for the rehearsal.

graduation. Provido is the youngest of three and would be the last to cross the stage and collect a diploma.

Then, everything got derailed.

"I was in the middle of AP Calc when I found out," Provido said. At first, he thought he was getting a vacation when he and his classmates were sent home for two weeks because of the coronavirus. "Me and my friends were all so excited to go home and play video games all day."

But two weeks turned into several, and slowly, all the celebrations Provido had been looking forward to slipped away. Prom was canceled, and instead of crossing a graduation stage, Provido sat in his living room and waited for his name to scroll past on the TV screen — a local news station aired the names of all the high school graduates.

His parents tried to make it an exciting day for him, and families in his suburban Maryland neighborhood passed out candy

SEE GRADUATION ON B3

Rioter gets two years in prison

VETERAN SEEN WITH TOMAHAWK ON JAN. 6

Authorities accuse him of echoing calls for violence

BY SPENCER S. HSU

A Marine war veteran who prosecutors said carried "a tactical tomahawk axe" into the U.S. Capitol during the Jan. 6, 2021, riot was sentenced Thursday to two years in federal prison.

Alex K. Harkrider, 36, traveled from rural East Texas to Washington with Ryan T. Nichols, 33, a friend and fellow former Marine, and both muscled their way into the Capitol with mobs of supporters of President Donald Trump, authorities said. While Harkrider carried the tomahawk, Nichols had a crowbar, pepper spray and bullhorn.

Authorities said the two men — who had stashed four firearms outside Washington — wore body armor during the Capitol attack, which occurred while a joint session of Congress was meeting to formally count 2020 electoral votes, confirming Joe Biden's victory in the presidential race.

Nichols, who pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Washington to obstructing an official proceeding and assaulting police officers, was sentenced May 2 to five years in prison and fined \$200,000, by far the largest financial penalty yet imposed in a Jan. 6 case, according to a spokeswoman for the U.S. attorney's office in the District.

On Thursday, it was Harkrider's turn to appear before Judge Royce C. Lamberth, who had sentenced Nichols.

Harkrider, a former infantryman who served in Iraq and

SEE JAN. 6 ON B3

Lawsuit in suicide of teen might move ahead

Judge suggests case against Bethesda prep school would advance

BY DAN MORSE

A Maryland judge indicated Friday he would probably allow a wrongful-death lawsuit against a Bethesda prep school to move forward, signaling a potential legal win for the parents of a teen seeking to hold the Landon School liable for their son's suicide.

Montgomery County Circuit Judge Louis M. Leibowitz did not specifically issue a ruling. But after hearing three hours of arguments around Landon's effort to dismiss the suit, he said he was inclined to keep at least some of the claims — namely those tied to negligence.

"I'm likely to let them move forward," Leibowitz said.

As he spoke, Dawn and Scott Schnell watched and listened from the front row of an eighth-floor courtroom in Rockville. Their son, Charlie, 16, took his life on March 27, 2022, two weeks after his parents had withdrawn him from the all-boys institution.

Leibowitz made a special point

SEE LAWSUIT ON B4

ELECTION 2024

Tuesday's D.C. primary features contests in bevy of local, federal races

Learn about the candidates, early voting — and why it all matters

BY WASHINGTON POST STAFF

D.C. residents will head to the polls June 4 to pick their council members and various delegates in Congress, while early voting begins Sunday.

The Democratic primary election is often the decisive contest in deep-blue D.C., and several incumbent D.C. Council members are seeking to ward off challengers, while in Ward 7, residents are picking the candidate who will probably succeed council member Vince Gray (D), who decided not to seek reelection amid ongoing health challenges.

At a time when the District's crime problem remains front-of-mind for many voters, and as elected leaders seek to continue chipping away at enduring issues such as housing insecurity and education disparities, voters



WASHINGTON POST ILLUSTRATION; ISTOCK

have critical choices to make about who they want to call the shots in office.

In this guide, get up to speed

on the basics of the primary election as voters start to head to the polls.

SEE PRIMARY ON B2

Comedian, incumbent face off for D.C. Council

Winner of the upcoming at-large primary is likely to prevail in Nov. vote

BY MEAGAN FLYNN

Rodney "Red" Grant says it's not funny.

The D.C. native has had enough of the jokes about being a comedian running for office. Now on his second attempt after a failed bid for mayor in 2022, Grant is all that stands between council member Robert C. White Jr. (D-At Large) and a third term in the June 4 Democratic primary — although it's a decidedly uphill climb.

"I'm doing the work right now, and the work speaks for itself," Grant, who runs a pair of programs focused on helping D.C. youths, said in an interview after a Capitol Hill candidate forum on

Monday evening. "The work is helping these communities grow, and it's no laughing matter."

This year's at-large race pits the entertainer-turned politician who can work a crowd against the more seasoned White, the housing committee chairman who often describes himself as a "problem solver" on the council and likes to get into the weeds on policy. In his eight years in office, White has developed a reputation for his work on social issues and housing affordability — as well as his mayoral ambitions, after he unsuccessfully challenged Muriel E. Bowser (D) in the 2022 primary. It's one thing he and Grant have in common — and now the two men are facing each other in the at-large race, sending White out on the citywide campaign trail to sell voters on his record.

"Often, if you point to the problem first, you have a headline. If you have a flashy idea, you have a

SEE COUNCIL ON B2

D.C.'s at-large candidates focus on youth crime, housing

COUNCIL FROM B1

headline. But you need people who are willing to get under the hood and do the work, and that's what I've done," White said.

The winner advances to the general election in November, where the at-large Democratic nominee faces a typically crowded slate of independent candidates and others, and the top two candidates win.

At the Hill Center on Monday, White and Grant debated the critical issues shaping the campaign in one of their last forums of the season, moderated by Capital Community News Managing Editor Andrew Lightman. One clear theme emerged: The kids aren't all right. From education to crime, the meatiest discussions centered on how to build more promising futures for the city's youths.

White recalled meeting a mother who said her 4-year-old daughter knows that when they park at their home, she already has to "have her seat belt off so they can get into the house safely."

"That is not the type of city we want to live in," White said.

When it comes to juvenile crime, both called for earlier intervention through preventive programs, as children have increasingly been either the victims or perpetrators of violent crime. And concerns about chronic truancy or absenteeism at D.C. public schools have compounded worries about keeping kids on track.

White pointed to a package of bills he introduced in February that would expand vocational education programs for students, create a citywide youth mentorship network for kids who have faced adversity and increase reporting requirements on students' attendance, which White said would allow officials to identify schools with struggling students sooner.

"There has to be an understanding there will be consequences" for crime, White said, "but we are best served if we have good prevention programs, like expanded vocational education that I'm working on, like mentoring kids across the city that I'm working on, like addressing truancy at its earliest stages, like I'm working on right now."

He also touted his proposal to create the position of emerging adult services director, intended to help coordinate a universe of available programs for at-risk youths in the legal system. The provision passed as part of the council's omnibus crime legislation, Secure D.C.

Grant, who returned to D.C. from Los Angeles after a career in entertainment — including producing television shows for Viacom and BET — has put his work with D.C. youths at the center of his campaign, saying he wants to build on it in office. He started Don't Shoot Guns, Shoot Cameras, a program exposing kids to videography and filmmaking. And he and his wife, a former police officer, run Beyond Your



D.C. Council candidates Rodney "Red" Grant, left, and Robert C. White Jr. speak at forum at the Hill Center in D.C. on May 20.



Grant, a comedian and D.C. native, previously ran for mayor in 2022. His bid to unseat incumbent White is an uphill battle. White is the favorite, and has a larger war chest at his disposal.

Block, introducing kids to new experiences like visiting the White House or attending a Commanders game, he said. He advocated for expanded vocational education, new programming in schools targeting kids' interests, like gaming or coding, and expanding diversion programs for

youths involved in crime.

"We have to have diversion programs for young people to go with their parents before they get to a certain point," said Grant, who noted that he had a brush with D.C.'s juvenile justice system as a child. "We gotta have some type of deterrence early so our young

people know we love them."

On housing, both candidates said they were deeply concerned about displacement. "It's getting out of control," Grant said of the proliferation of luxury high-rises. "We have to make sure we have apartment buildings that service everyone. If you can't afford

that despite White's many legislative proposals, he was the "more relatable" candidate. "My opponent, as much as he's legislating, I love it, but you've got to get into the community and be boots on the ground," Grant said, arguing that was more his style. He has bristled at being labeled or viewed as "just a comedian," or entertainer, even releasing a moody campaign ad titled, "I'm not just one thing."

White has spent more than \$180,000 in the campaign to Grant's \$116,000 — but has a much larger war chest at his disposal. While both are leveraging public financing, White has over \$300,000 on hand compared with Grant's \$67,000.

In an interview, White described his experience as the key distinction over his opponent. If elected to a new term, White said, focusing on crime and the future of D.C.'s economy would be his priority. He highlighted legislation he's introduced targeting problems in the criminal justice system such as at D.C.'s 911 center and its crime lab. He has proposed launching a task force to study the 911 center's troubles and creating hiring incentives to attract talent to the D.C. crime lab, which has yet to regain full accreditation after a 2021 scandal.

Since taking over as chair of the housing committee last year, housing has largely been the bedrock of White's work on the council. He pointed to his oversight of the D.C. Housing Authority following a scathing federal audit that found public housing was, in some cases, in uninhabitable conditions and management of the housing stock was rife with problems. White had some standout moments during scrutiny of the former DCHA administration, such as his questioning of former executive director Brenda Donald over the \$41,000 bonus check she received while the agency was in shambles.

Asked what problems he has solved, White said he worked to ease a backlog of housing vouchers by identifying holdups, such as a lack of social workers to help residents, and passed legislation creating a free master's in social work degree at the University of the District of Columbia to incentivize more of them. And he pointed to his advocacy for millions in more funding for emergency rental assistance last year after Bowser's proposed cuts. It's been one of his fiercest policy disagreements with the mayor, and the two engaged in last month's tensest exchanges at one of the budget hearing over funding for the program — harking back to their campaign rivalry two years ago.

Asked whether he is looking to challenge Bowser in the future, White said he is focused on his council work for now.

"I just want to make sure I stay focused on that and people know I'm focused on that," White said.

While mail-in voting is underway, early voting for the June 4 primary begins Sunday.

\$4,000 and can only afford \$800, they should still be able to live here, too."

White, who also is a D.C. native, said he thinks about his grandfather who bought a rowhouse in the city in 1963 for \$14,000 — and how that block, while structurally the same, is now racially and economically unrecognizable. "We need to build housing for the people that are here, not just the people that we hope to come here," White said.

The council member said the same logic applied to the future of the RFK Stadium site. He said he would support the return of a football stadium only if more housing was prioritized at the site and if building the stadium didn't use taxpayer money. Grant said he welcomed a new stadium — and likewise said it should not require taxpayer money.

White is the heavy favorite in the race. But Grant is not without a base. His star power as a comedian and his work with D.C. youths have built him a following and name recognition that doesn't always come easy for candidates who have never held office. In his mayoral race in 2022, he leveraged his social and professional connections to make a splash, for example with an endorsement from Snoop Dogg. Running as an independent, he garnered 29,000 votes in the general election — light-years behind Bowser in second place but not nothing for a first-time candidate. White had garnered more than 50,000 votes against Bowser in the primary.

In an interview, Grant argued

In deep-blue D.C.'s decisive primary, early voting gets underway Sunday

PRIMARY FROM B1

Local races on the ballot

D.C. Council wards 2, 4, 7 and 8 and one at-large seat will be on the ballot, as will delegate to the House and the shadow U.S. senator and U.S. representative offices.

Who are the candidates running for D.C. Council?

In the at-large race, two-term council member Robert C. White Jr. (D), chairman of the housing committee, is competing against Rodney "Red" Grant, a comedian and former television producer who runs a pair of programs for D.C. youths.

In Ward 2, council member Brooke Pinto (D) is running unopposed.

In Ward 4, council member Janeese Lewis George (D) faces a challenge from Lisa Gore, an advisory neighborhood commissioner and retired law enforcement officer from the U.S. Department of Housing's Office of the Inspector General;

and Paul Johnson, a mediator and former municipal investment banker. In Ward 7, a whopping 10 candidates are competing to succeed Gray in the Democratic primary.

They are: Ebon Brown, an educator; Kelvin Brown, an advisory neighborhood commissioner and housing professional; Wendell Felder, chairman of his Advisory Neighborhood Commission, the former president of Ward 7 Democrats and the director of regional affairs at Howard University; Nate Fleming, a law professor; Roscoe Grant Jr., a former D.C. employee; Villareal "VJ" Johnson II, also in education; Ebony Payne, an advisory neighborhood commissioner and founder of District Herbs; Veda Rasheed, an attorney; Denise Reed, who worked for three former council chairmen; and Eboni-Rose Thompson, president and Ward 7 representative on the D.C. State Board of Education. In Ward 8, council member

Trayon White Sr. is facing Salim Adofo, an advisory neighborhood commissioner; and Rahman Branch, the former principal of Ballou High School; in the Democratic primary. Nate Derenge is seeking the Republican nomination.

Who's running for the Democratic nomination for House delegate?

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton is seeking her 18th term in office and, turning 87 in June, will tie for the oldest member of the U.S. House. Though the House delegate does not have voting rights, Norton's role has of late been centered on speaking against a barrage of Republican-led legislation designed to block D.C. laws and policies. She is facing Kelly Mikel Williams, who has held numerous roles at the federal and local government levels. In his campaign, while he has applauded the last "33 years of service," he has said it's time for the "next generations of Washingtonians to step up for

D.C.'s future." Myrtle Patricia Alexander is running in the Republican primary, while Kymone Freeman is running in the Green Party.

What about shadow senator and shadow representative?

Shadow senators and representatives for D.C. are advocates for the city in Congress, though they are less formal than the House delegate, with no voting rights or floor privileges. A shadow senator seat is open after Sen. Michael D. Brown announced he is retiring. Ankit Jain, a voting rights attorney, is facing Eugene Kinlow, who has previously worked as a federal affairs lobbyist for Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D). In the shadow representative race, incumbent Oye Owolewa (D), who was elected in 2020, faces a challenge from Linda Gray, vice chair of the D.C. Democratic Party. Ciprian Ivanof is seeking the Republican nomination.

How do I vote?

Election Day is June 4, and you can also vote at an early voting center from Sunday through June 2 (note that those centers will be closed on Memorial Day,

May 27). Hours of the early voting centers are 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

All registered D.C. voters also should have received a ballot in the mail. If you want to vote by mail, follow the included instructions to mail back your ballot. Mailed ballots must be postmarked by Election Day, June 4. Alternatively, you can drop off your ballot at any ballot drop box in the city until 8 p.m. on Election Day. D.C. has same-day voter registration, so you can show up at any vote center on Election Day with proof of residence and be issued a ballot. If you do not have proof of residence, you can vote a special ballot that day, then bring proof of residence to the Board of Elections by 5 p.m. on June 6 to have your ballot counted. Here is a map of all the drop boxes, early voting centers and Election Day vote centers.

I live in D.C., but I'm not a U.S. citizen. Am I allowed to vote?

Yes, in some races. D.C. enacted a law allowing noncitizens to vote in local elections in the city, beginning with the June 4 primary. Noncitizens are allowed to vote for local positions, such as D.C. Council

member, but they cannot vote for federal offices, such as president or delegate to the House. Noncitizens will receive a ballot with only local races.

What about the recalls I've been hearing about — will those be on the ballot?

No. Two separate recall efforts — one against council member Charles Allen (D-Ward 6), another targeting council member Brianne K. Nadeau (D-Ward 1) — are underway. Those behind the recall efforts are working to get the required number of signatures for the recalls to be set before voters. But those recalls would not occur during any regularly scheduled elections; rather, the city would hold a special election in just that ward if opponents gather the required number of signatures.

Will Initiative 83 be on the ballot too?

Initiative 83 — which would enact ranked-choice voting in the District, and make the city's primary elections open to all voters, regardless of party — will go before voters in November if petition supporters gather enough signatures.



The Guide to Offers
The Washington Post

Enter for the chance to win a pair of tickets to Brooks & Dunn on June 13 at Merriweather Post Pavilion

"With 20 No. 1 hits stretching back to 1991, two Grammy awards, dozens of ACM and CMA honors and a discography counting more album sales than any duo in history regardless of genre, [Kix] Brooks & [Ronnie] Dunn's influence on today's country has never been in question. Hits like 'Boot Scootin' Boogie,' 'My Maria' and 'Believe' have propelled the duo to more than 30 million albums sold" (brooks-dunn.com). In 2019 the group was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. "Brooks & Dunn are a country legacy act, there's no doubt" (desertsun.com).

See details at [washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388)



Marine veteran who rioted Jan. 6 receives 2 years

JAN. 6 FROM B1

Afghanistan, was convicted in January of four felonies and three misdemeanors.

His attorney Kira West said Harkrider, who said he has post-traumatic stress disorder and a history of heavy drinking, was the “follower” and Nichols the “leader” as the two stormed the Capitol. She unsuccessfully sought a sentence of three months, the amount of time Harkrider already has spent behind bars.

“I don’t mean in any way to minimize what happened on Jan. 6,” Harkrider told the judge, adding, “I do take responsibility for my actions and what I said that day.”

The U.S. attorney’s office asked for a three-year prison term. “Harkrider equipped himself to be ready for violence on January 6 and look[ed] forward to what Nichols predicted would be an ‘actual battle,’” prosecutors wrote in a sentencing memo filed in court.

In Nichols’s case, prosecutors said that after he clashed with police officers, pepper-spraying some of them, he exhorted other rioters through his bullhorn: “If you have a weapon, you need to get your weapon! ... This is the second revolution right here. ... This is not a peaceful protest.”

Harkrider was at Nichols’s side throughout the mayhem, prosecutors said, and he echoed Nichols’s calls for violence, telling the mob: “Cut their freaking head off! You can do it.” They said he was standing on a Capitol window ledge and drew a hand across his throat in a slashing motion as rioters around him roared approval.

On Thursday, Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah W. Rocha said

Harkrider joined a mob of rioters who used the force of their bodies to push against outnumbered police at the entrance to a tunnel where several officers were assaulted with chemical spray and physical objects. He also carried away a broken chair leg from the Capitol as a souvenir, Rocha said.

West, the defense attorney, blamed Trump and his advisers for engaging in a “massive effort” to spread false information that the election had been stolen from Trump by voter fraud in key states.

West said Harkrider and others like him were used as “pawns” by right-wing extremist groups such as the Proud Boys and others who wanted violence that day.

“Mr. Harkrider committed no violent actions,” West said. “He did not destroy anything. Unfortunately, he now understands that going into the Capitol that day was way beyond a peaceful protest and he sincerely regrets his actions.”

In a letter to the judge, Harkrider said he had started a catering business and was “profoundly sorry” that his conduct cast a shadow over his efforts to help people in his community.

Lamberth said Harkrider was “basically a good person” who “did good by your country by serving in Iraq and Afghanistan” but “did wrong that day.” The Capitol riot, the judge said, “was a disaster for the country.”

More than 1,400 people have been federally charged in the violence that began after Trump urged his supporters to march to the Capitol.

Five people died in the attack or in the immediate aftermath, and more than 100 police officers were injured.



JOHN MINCHILLO/AP

ABOVE: Supporters of President Donald Trump at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Five people died in the insurrection or in its immediate aftermath.

RIGHT: Alex K. Harkrider is seen during the attack. Investigators added a circle to highlight a tomahawk ax he was carrying. Harkrider and a friend traveled from East Texas to D.C. and muscled their way into the Capitol with other rioters, authorities say.



U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR D.C.

Covid canceled their high school graduations. At last, they’re taking the stage.

GRADUATION FROM B1

and goody bags to other graduates in a drive-by ceremony. But it all felt forced, Provido said. He remembers sitting in his parents’ car as his neighbors passed small gifts through the window — but it didn’t feel like a celebration.

“It felt like that chapter never really ended,” Provido said. “And I really just lost the sense of who I was then, and I never really knew where I was going to go next.”

Provido and millions of other students found themselves at a crossroads in the summer of 2020: Go off to college or stay at home. Many of his peers were choosing the latter. More than 461,000 fewer students enrolled in college that fall, nearly twice the rate of decline from the previous year, according to national estimates. Most of that loss was driven by undergraduates.

It was hard to think about the future when the present felt so fragile. Provido felt the drive he had in high school seeping out of him, and he says he couldn’t envision finishing college. “I didn’t know where the world would go, I didn’t know where else my life would go,” he said.

With an enrollment deadline looming, Provido landed some-

where in the middle. He would go to college but stay home. He enrolled at nearby Bowie State University and, although he had a scholarship that would cover the cost of housing, lived with his parents about 30 minutes from campus.

“Although it was very hard for me, I still wanted to follow in their footsteps, and I still wanted to make them proud,” Provido said. He had spent the first several years of his life in the Philippines, where his father grew up in a one-room cinder-block house and chased sponsorships at universities abroad. “My dad knew America would bring my siblings and me so much more opportunity.”

But it wasn’t the start to college that Provido expected. He had looked forward to the hallmarks of campus life — living in dorms, meeting new people and joining clubs. Instead, all of his classes were virtual, and he watched lectures from his bed. The courses weren’t as challenging as he thought they would be.

Provido and his classmates spent so much time online that the internet also became their student center and library. He made friends on social media and in online groups.

By his sophomore year, many

“The excitement that I had four years ago is back. The chapter never really closed [then] because of the circumstances. This time I feel like my undergraduate chapter, and my life these past four years, are actually coming to a close.”

Chris Provido, who just graduated from Bowie State University, on having an in-person commencement

colleges were slowly reopening their doors. In the fall of 2021, he had his first in-person classes. He said it was a “major transition” from his online coursework.

“When I did finally go in person, I did finally experience that rigor,” Provido said about his courses.

He also found a community of classmates, professors and mentors. He dove into his field — his degree is in biology — and spent every summer interning and do-

ing biomedical research at places like the University of Virginia and Harvard University medical schools.

“I realized that I loved the field, I loved the work, I loved the research,” he said about his summer at Harvard, where he helped validate what was potentially a first-of-its-kind protein while conducting immunology and genomics research.

Provido loved it so much he

applied for a PhD program in immunology at Stanford University. He got in and will move in the fall after a 2½-month research internship in France. He was due abroad this week but told his program managers he would have to arrive late — he couldn’t miss another graduation.

But first, there were more mundane celebrations. He enjoyed one last Taco Tuesday, a cherished tradition, in Bowie State’s cafeteria with a hard-shell taco and ground beef topped with rice, corn and beans — plus sides of salsa and guacamole. “I was really getting all the sides and living it up.”

Provido got his first glimpse at commencement during a practice ceremony earlier this week, where hundreds of anxious soon-to-be graduates assembled in an air-conditioned auditorium. They exchanged hugs, showed off fresh manicures and tried on gowns while a university official ran through a list of rules: no balloons, no strollers, get here early.

It was “nerve-racking,” Provido said after the dry run. Not only was it his first time meeting the university’s president, but the fact that he was done with college was sinking in.

“The excitement that I had four years ago is back,” he said. “The

chapter never really closed [then] because of the circumstances. This time I feel like my undergraduate chapter, and my life these past four years, are actually coming to a close.”

The next morning, Friday, as Provido and other graduates filed into Bulldog Stadium, memories from the pandemic loomed large. The senior class president joked about how good everyone was at picking out shirts for Zoom class. University President Aminta H. Breaux congratulated the class for overcoming the “obstacles and hurdles” of covid. In a prerecorded video, Vice President Harris offered her praise.

“Through early-morning classes and late-night study sessions, through remote learning and social distancing, with the support of your friends and family and the faculty and staff, you made it to graduation,” Harris said.

A little more than three hours in, it was time for Provido to line up. As the officials onstage called the names of his seatmates — *Tae’lor A. Francois, Joshua Spann and Renee Elizabeth Taylor* — he felt hope. Then came the moment he’d waited for.

“Chris Geo Aleligay Provido,” the announcer said. “Magnam cum laude.”

THE DISTRICT

D.C. police captain able to record part of a shooting in which he was hurt

BY PETER HERMANN AND KEITH L. ALEXANDER

A D.C. police captain who was injured when a gunman fired at his personal vehicle in Northwest Washington on Monday managed to record part of the incident on his phone, but dropped it as gunfire erupted, according to a police affidavit filed in D.C. Superior Court.

The captain, an 18-year veteran headed into work at the Fourth District station, was injured in the head by shattered glass, the affidavit says. Police said in the affidavit that the captain captured on video a blue Honda Accord being driven erratically and its Ohio license plate.

That enabled D.C. police in the department’s Falcon helicopter to quickly spot the Honda and pursue it into Maryland, where they said it crashed onto its side in Landover. Police said they recovered a 9mm Springfield Hellcat semiautomatic handgun that had

been tossed from the vehicle.

Police said they arrested Rasheed Thorne, of Northwest Washington, and William Walker IV, of Upper Marlboro, Md. The affidavit identifies Walker as the driver and Thorne as passenger. Both are 21 years old.

The shooting occurred shortly after noon in the 5800 block of Seventh Street NW, between Oglethorpe and Nicholson streets, a residential neighborhood in Brightwood. Police have said the captain was driving his personal SUV and was wearing civilian clothes.

The affidavit says the captain first noticed the blue Accord behind him at 3rd Street and Missouri Avenue NW. The captain told investigators that the Accord’s driver “abruptly sped up” and pulled in front of him, then slowed and changed lanes, according to the affidavit.

When the captain tried to pass the Accord, the affidavit says, its driver “began swerving across

both lanes in front of the vehicle, preventing him from passing,” the affidavit says.

The affidavit says the captain was recording through his front windshield as the Honda’s driver pulled into an alley off Oglethorpe Street. The affidavit says the passenger got out, approached the captain’s SUV and fired four shots at its side. The captain dropped his phone as he moved out of the way and was struck in both eyes and his forehead with shards of glass, the affidavit says.

Earlier this week, police had said they weren’t sure if he had been grazed by a bullet, struck by glass or both.

“The victim stated that he had no exchange of any kind with the suspect before or during the incident,” the affidavit says. The court documents do not describe an apparent motive.

The gunman got back into the Honda, and the car drove away. The captain drove five blocks to the Fourth District station on

Georgia Avenue NW and reported the shooting. He recalled the color of the vehicle and the letters “JYD” on the license plate, which he believed was from a Midwestern state because he saw a wheat stalk.

The captain’s video confirmed his memory: the Accord’s license plate, with JYD in it, is registered to Walker, according to court documents filed in Prince George’s County.

Thorne and Walker each face charges of possession of a firearm by a felon in Maryland. Thorne remained detained in Prince George’s on Friday. Walker was extradited Thursday to D.C., where he faces charges of assault with a dangerous weapon and possession of a firearm during a crime of violence.

At a D.C. Superior Court hearing on Friday, Magistrate Judge Heidi Herrmann ordered Walker held in D.C. jail and set a hearing for Tuesday. Attempts to reach Walker’s attorney were not suc-

cessful after the hearing.

Maryland court documents say Thorne was convicted of a firearms offense in D.C. in September. Details of how that case was adjudicated were not available in Superior Court records.

Those charging documents also say Walker was convicted of

firearm offenses in Prince George’s in 2021 and 2022, and received jail terms of one year and three years. The records show the sentences were suspended.

Jasmine Hilton contributed to this report.

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MARYLAND

Pr. George's lawmakers pass \$5.4 billion budget amid funding limitations

BY LATESHIA BEACHUM

The Prince George's County Council passed a \$5.46 billion operating budget in a majority vote Thursday, focusing on priorities such as public safety while faced with limited funding.

Chair Jolene Ivey (District 5) said a \$171 million budget shortfall, higher interest rates along with rising inflation and the end of coronavirus pandemic funds meant the council had to be judicious in what it was going to fund for the fiscal year.

"The budget this year and over the next few years is going to be the biggest challenge facing our county," Ivey said in a statement before the all-Democratic body, comparing the county's budget process to family accounting. "Families have to plan for the future and save for emergencies, and our county needs to also

consider long-term sustainability."

Ivey's remarks mirror those of County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks (D), who proposed a \$5.46 billion budget in March while announcing that more than 800 county positions would be frozen. Alsobrooks, who recently won the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate, said difficult decisions had to be made amid lackluster revenue and increased state mandates for education spending. To avoid raising taxes on county residents, she pivoted to finding new ways to fill the budget gap by securing money from local telecommunications and energy taxes that went to fund schools and dipping into the county's reserves.

The council's budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 offers little variation from Alsobrooks's proposed budget. Limited

ed funds meant leaders had to decide between needs and wants. There is no funding for the Fair Election Fund in this budget, Ivey noted as an example.

Despite the financial limitations, the county allocated an additional \$200,000 to help the Prince George's County Police Department fill vacancies. The council also negotiated with the executive branch to create another 50 firefighting positions.

The council gave an additional \$3 million in nondepartmental grants to help fund the county's nonprofits and added \$100,000 for animal services in the Department of the Environment and Animal Services.

In keeping with Alsobrooks's determination to build the county's health infrastructure, the council will invest \$250,000 in a state-of-the-art sickle cell machine and operational needs at

the University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center to help residents who make up a significant portion of the state's sickle cell patients. Alsobrooks secured \$38 million in funding from the state in April to expand the county's health-care access.

The council has had differing views on what cannabis reform means and what growth of the industry should look like within the county, but members were united in providing \$2 million to the Cannabis Reinvestment and Restoration Fund, which will manage state Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund dollars given to communities disproportionately affected by drug-related law enforcement practices.

Most residents will not feel the impact of the restrictive budget, Ivey said.

"[For] the average person,

their trash will still be picked up and the potholes will mostly be filled," she said. "It's more the things that we would like to do, like add more sidewalks — the wants instead of needs."

The passage of the council's budget came just hours after Alsobrooks's office announced that Fitch, one of three financial ratings agencies, maintained the county's AAA bond rating and stable economic outlook.

"Despite our challenges with this year's budget cycle, this rating is the latest sign that we have fought to maintain the fiscal health of the County," Alsobrooks said in a statement. "We will continue moving forward with our economic growth strategy and fiscal discipline in our budget so we can maintain our county's stable economic outlook"

The council's vice chair, Syd-

ney Harrison (District 9), said the Fitch rating acknowledges the work that county leaders have invested in to grow its economy while being mindful of resources.

"[Fitch] saw the investments with the FBI relocation, the possibility of data centers, three data centers, coming to Prince George's County, that brings more enhancement in revenues coming in," Harrison said. "They saw us put cost containment measures in place and how we reallocated service to invest in the people."

The budget will probably remain a concern for leaders beyond this fiscal year. In January, the county's Spending Affordability Committee predicted that structural challenges could leave Prince George's with a deficit of up to \$407 million within the next five fiscal years.

In hearing over school's bid to dismiss lawsuit, judge signals it could advance

LAWSUIT FROM B1

to speak directly to the Schnells at the end of the hearing — a way to extend his sympathies while stressing they couldn't affect his decisions.

"I can't imagine what you have gone through," he told them, adding, "These are legal issues that I have to make a judgment about."

In the teen's final days at the school, Landon officials accused him of drawing a racist image directed at Black people.

Leibowitz said he continues to consider stronger claims against Landon — that its actions amounted to "intentional infliction of emotional distress" on the family. The judge said he probably will dismiss a claim that Landon's actions violated Maryland's Consumer Protection Act. "I would move forward," he told attorneys on both sides, "as if that's going away."

On Friday, Landon's attorneys advanced arguments they had previously filed in court papers. Two of the main ones: Landon could not have foreseen Schnell's

death because he had not expressed "suicidal intent or ideation," and Landon's legal duty to protect Schnell ended when he left the school.

Nothing from Friday's hearing means a trial — set to begin in May 2025 — is imminent or that the Schnells would prevail. Landon's attorneys will still have a chance to defeat the claims by seeking a summary judgment.

And the hearing Friday, the first significant one in the litigation, didn't address whether the allegations in the suit could be proven. It addressed arguments by Landon's attorneys that, as a matter of law, the claims should be dismissed.

The central claims in the case are deeply debated.

In their lawsuit, attorneys for the Schnells contended that Landon officials ignored a series of mental health warning signs given off by their son, pushed him from the school in a rushed discipline process after he was accused of creating a racist drawing, and then failed to protect him from online bullying by his



Dawn and Scott Schnell filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against the Landon School, in Bethesda, where their son Charlie attended.

former classmates before he killed himself.

"Suicide was the foreseeable consequence," the Schnells' attorneys wrote in court filings, "of egregious failures by defendants

to protect him from harm and to warn his parents of such harm."

In court filings, Landon officials described Charlie Schnell's final disciplinary matter at the school, while he was facing ex-

pulsion for earlier incidents, as extremely serious: He drew what they characterized as a violent image directed at Black people that he showed to a Black classmate. The allegation followed three incidents in which Schnell was accused of using offensive language — in one case directed at a lacrosse coach.

A copy of the drawing, a description of it, or any explanation of what the teen may have been thinking when he drew it has not yet appeared in any legal filings. Landon's attorneys, as part of court filings seeking to stay discovery pending resolution of their motion to dismiss, said that details of the "troubling drawing" would emerge if the case proceeds to trial and that wounds around the incident "should not be reopened lightly."

An attorney for the Schnells declined to comment Friday after the hearing. Attorneys for Landon could not immediately be reached.

In the lawsuit, Charlie Schnell's parents pointed to a journal entry he wrote for his English

class as a sign of trouble the school should have alerted the family about.

"Right now, I'm tired and worried," he wrote, describing illness that put him behind in school, how medicine zapped his motivation and fears over school shootings. But he also wrote that he was grateful for his loyal friends. "I'd sum everything up to being tired, in pain, thankful, and worried."

Landon argued the journal indicated otherwise.

"A plain reading of the statements in [Charlie Schnell's] classroom journal reveals understandable feelings of concern, but at no point does [he] state, or even imply, that he was contemplating suicide or self-harm," their attorneys wrote in a brief filed with the court, saying that he also wrote of his friends and feeling hopeful.

Leibowitz is expected to issue a formal, written opinion soon.

If you or someone you know needs help now, call the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988.

OBITUARIES

MORGAN SPURLOCK, 53

'Super Size Me' filmmaker was often the narrator and guide in his movies

BY BRIAN MURPHY

Morgan Spurlock, a documentary filmmaker whose Oscar-nominated "Super Size Me" chronicled a month of watching his body swell and health decline while eating only McDonald's meals, launching a highly flying career that later imploded after he acknowledged past incidents of sexual assault and harassment, died May 23 at a hospital in New York City. He was 53.

The cause was cancer, Mr. Spurlock's family announced.

Mr. Spurlock directed or produced nearly 70 documentaries for film and television, often throwing himself into the center as narrator and guide such as spending weeks in a Virginia jail to explore life behind bars or roaming from Morocco to Pakistan in a quixotic hunt for al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

"Super Size Me," which was released in 2004 and brought Mr. Spurlock his initial burst of acclaim, was an indictment of America's fast-food culture and a first-person journey into the country's health problems, including rising obesity levels. Mr. Spurlock and his then-girlfriend, a pro-vegan foodie, became the yin and yang of his high-calorie odyssey.

As the month unfolds, Mr. Spurlock's belly begins to spread, and his face grows puffy. The bad news from his doctor piles up: Cholesterol is spiking, liver dysfunction crops up. Mr. Spurlock talks of his bouts of depression and how his libido seems to have evaporated.

The rules he set for himself in the documentary meant he had to accept a "supersize" option if asked while ordering breakfast, lunch or dinner. Mr. Spurlock also scaled back his normal exercise to match the average American's physical activity.

In one scene, he pulls up to a McDonald's drive-through. "Yeah, could I get the double



Morgan Spurlock at the "Super Size Me" premiere in 2004 in Los Angeles. Mr. Spurlock revealed his history of sexual misconduct as the #MeToo movement widened, which effectively ended his career.

Quarter Pounder with cheese meal?" he said into the intercom.

"Large or supersize?" the order-taker asked.

"I think I'm going to have to go supersize," Mr. Spurlock said.

By the end of the month, Mr. Spurlock put on 25 pounds. (His then-girlfriend and eventual wife, Alexandra Jamieson, used her plan to slim down Mr. Spurlock as basis for her 2005 book, "The Great American Detox Diet.")

Mr. Spurlock's filmmaking style borrowed elements from the gonzo-style journalism popularized in the 1970s, using outsider-looking-in storytelling and irreverent anecdotes and interviews. "We want to give you permission to laugh in the plac-

es where it's really hard to laugh," he said.

The idea to put his body on the line came during a Thanksgiving visit to his parents' home in 2002. He saw a TV news report about two girls who had sued McDonald's, claiming the chain had misrepresented the nutritional value of its menu and caused them to put on significant weight. (A judge dismissed the suit.)

"A spokesman for McDonald's came on and said, you can't link their obesity to our food — our food is healthy, it's nutritious," Mr. Spurlock told the New York Times. "I thought, 'If it's so good for me, I should be able to eat it every day, right?'"

The documentary, made for \$65,000 and which debuted at

the Sundance Film Festival, grossed more than \$22 million and elevated Mr. Spurlock into the ranks of celebrity sleuths shining a harsh light on modern America, including filmmaker Michael Moore, and author and scholar Robert Putnam. Yet "Super Size Me" also brought questions about what Mr. Spurlock may have left out.

He resisted calls to release logs that tracked his food consumption during the month, and in 2017 he acknowledged that he never stopped drinking alcohol for more than a week during the previous 30 years. That suggested he was drinking during some, or possibly all, of the McDonald's-only month, which could have influenced his medical results.

That disclosure came as part of a bigger bombshell. As the #MeToo movement widened, Mr. Spurlock posted a blog message saying he had a history of sexual misconduct, including acknowledging he was accused of sexual assault while in college. He also said he had paid his former female assistant to keep silent about his sexual harassment of her. He said he repeatedly called her "sex pants" and "hot pants" in the office.

In an apparent attempt to get ahead of any stories about his past, Mr. Spurlock described himself as "part of the problem" and stepped down from the production company Warrior Poets, which he co-founded in 2004 with producer Jeremy Chilnick.

"As I sit around watching hero after hero, man after man, fall at the realization of their past indiscretions, I don't sit by and wonder 'who will be next?' I wonder, 'when will they come for me?'" Mr. Spurlock wrote.

The revelations effectively ended Mr. Spurlock's career and put his last project in limbo. The documentary "Super Size Me 2: Holy Chicken!" was finished in 2017 but not released until two years later. In the film, Mr. Spurlock looked behind the menus at fast-food chains and other restaurants and often debunked their claims of serving healthier and more ethically sourced products.

Film student in New York

Morgan Valentine Spurlock was born in Parkersburg, W.Va., on Nov. 7, 1970, and raised in Beckley in the southern part of the state. His father owned an auto repair shop, and his mother was a junior high school and high school guidance counselor.

He graduated in 1993 from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. He began his career as a production assistant on film sets in New York, including "Léon: The Professional" (1994), written and directed by

Luc Besson.

Mr. Spurlock's marriages to Priscilla Sommer, Jamieson and Sara Bernstein ended in divorce. Survivors include a son each from his second and third marriages; his parents; and two brothers.

Mr. Spurlock first gained notice as a playwright, staging his drama "The Phoenix" in New York and elsewhere. He then created an MTV series, "I Bet You Will," which had contestants accepting dares such as eating a jar of mayonnaise.

His 2008 project "Where in the World is Osama bin Laden?" mixed animation, interviews and even songs as Mr. Spurlock traveled across the Muslim world in a faux-serious effort to beat U.S. intelligence and track down bin Laden on his own. The reviews were deeply split. Some critics praised his attempts to show the diversity and complexity of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. Others dismissed the film as vapid and self-indulgent.

In his other documentaries, Mr. Spurlock dug into American subcultures and commerce, such as the comic book expo Comic-Con in "Comic-Con Episode IV: A Fan's Hope" and the marketing and advertising industry with "POM Wonderful Presents: The Greatest Movie Ever Sold," both released in 2011.

He also explored life in lockup by spending 23 days in custody with inmates at Virginia's Henrico County Jail in 2006 as part of his FX network series "30 Days." On CNN, Mr. Spurlock hosted and produced the 2013-2016 series "Morgan Spurlock Inside Man," which investigated various U.S.-based subjects such as migrant labor and elder care.

"I never wanted to do anything else," Mr. Spurlock told the Guardian, recalling his drive to make documentary films. "I was awkward as a kid. I wasn't the best looking or the most athletic or the funniest — I was just persistent and tenacious."

OBITUARIES

GREG SCHNEIDERS, 77



BOB DAUGHERTY/AP

Greg Schneiders, right, walks with President Jimmy Carter to a helicopter on the White House lawn in 1978. Schneiders had sold two failing watering holes by the time he first saw candidate Carter.

D.C. barkeeper nestled into Jimmy Carter's brain trust

BY BRIAN MURPHY

Greg Schneiders, a Democratic political adviser who began as a struggling Capitol Hill bar owner and made his way into President Jimmy Carter's inner circle, taking on roles that included helping create the disaster relief agency FEMA, died May 8 at his home in Key Largo, Fla. He was 77.

Mr. Schneiders had a heart attack while sleeping, said his son, Nate Schneiders.

Among the countless "how I got into politics" stories in Washington, Mr. Schneiders's was one of tough lessons and lucky timing. In 1974, he had just sold two failing drinking spots he co-owned, a saloon called Whitby's on Capitol Hill and Georgetown Beef Co., a beer and burger joint.

He went on unemployment with a stack of debts following him and his business partner, a friend from their days at Georgetown University. "I never intended to do it for the rest of my life," Mr. Schneiders told The Washington Post. "But no one in my family had ever run a business. I was enchanted by it."

While visiting his brother near Boston, he attended a Carter campaign rally when the former Georgia governor was still regarded as a long shot for the Democratic nomination. Mr. Schneider was impressed by Carter and offered his services. He knew little about campaigning but had a gift for speech writing and what he called intuitive people skills that he honed as a bar owner.

He began at the bottom, helping lead campaign buses and keeping track of luggage. Being on the road, however, put him in contact with the candidate. Soon, Mr. Schneiders was added to the team, led by chief strategist Hamilton Jordan, tasked with crafting Carter's image and finding ways to use his homespun qualities, including his peanut farmer days, to break out from the rest of the Democratic field.

"Carter was having difficulty overcoming a sense that he was different," Mr. Schneiders recalled, "that people didn't really know who he was or what made him tick."

After Carter's victory over incumbent Gerald Ford in 1976 — in a campaign that included anger over Ford's pardoning of his predecessor, Richard M. Nixon, from potential Watergate crimes — Mr. Schneiders watched from the window of a friend's office on Inauguration Day in January 1977 when the president-elect

and Rosalynn Carter walked up Pennsylvania Avenue.

Mr. Schneiders entered the White House as a speechwriter and deputy communications director and later had roles including head of special projects, a portfolio that made Mr. Schneiders part of Carter's top initiatives. Among them were efforts by Carter to bring various disaster-response groups under one umbrella.

That led to the creation in 1979 of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. Mr. Schneiders often served as Carter's personal representative at major natural disasters, including touring Johnstown, Pa., after devastating flooding in July 1977 that claimed more than 80 lives.

"The politics of disaster relief are amazingly straightforward," Mr. Schneiders said, years after leaving the White House "It's an amalgam of ambulance-chasing and pork barrel. You show up, express your concern and promise money — and you will be rewarded with votes."

In July 1979, Mr. Schneiders drafted a cautionary memo to Carter. He had read the president's upcoming speech and was troubled. Carter would say, in a nationally televised speech, that the nation was suffering from a "crisis of confidence" to combat double-digit inflation and rising fuel prices, partly caused by supply disruptions after the Iranian Revolution.

Mr. Schneiders predicted the exasperated tone of Carter's address would give his opponents more ammunition against him in the 1980 presidential race. (Carter would confront another crisis later in 1979 after Iranian militants overran the U.S. Embassy and held 52 Americans captive for the rest of his presidential term.)

"Look carefully at each self-deprecating remark and each negative comment about America," Mr. Schneiders wrote in the memo, which became part of the archives at the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta. "We'd hear them thrown back at nouseam during a campaign."

His premonition proved correct. Republican candidate Ronald Reagan seized on Carter's "malaise" speech — even though Carter never used that word.

Mr. Schneiders was among a small group of Carter administration insiders to learn the results of internal polling during the closing days of the 1980 campaign, showing Reagan surging to a 10-point lead. Mr. Schneiders was by the president's side on Air

Force One when the pollster, Patrick Caddell, told Carter it appeared that reelection was out of reach.

After Carter's defeat, Mr. Schneiders advised the Senate's minority leader, Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), and helped direct the unsuccessful presidential campaigns of astronaut-turned-senator John Glenn (D-Ohio) in 1984 and Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt (D) in 1988.

Mr. Schneiders later founded a Washington-based consulting firm, Prime Group, which assisted in communications strategies for nonprofit organizations and corporate clients.

On the campaign trail, Mr. Schneiders said it was common to put on weight from constant snacking, evenings at the bar and lack of exercise. He marveled at how Carter never seemed to add an extra pound.

"He used to kid me about the fact that I was gaining weight and he was not," Mr. Schneiders recalled in an oral history with a presidential historian. They only time Carter indulged was during a dinner with Rosalynn, Mr. Schneiders recalled: "They would have a dinner together and have a bottle of wine or something."

Gregory Stephen Schneiders was born in Detroit on April 15, 1947. His father was a psychologist, and his mother was a homemaker.

Mr. Schneiders was a few credits short of graduating from Georgetown in late 1969 when he used a \$20,000 loan arranged by his mother to help buy Chadwick's bar. (He had worked as the bar manager at Chadwick's, which was renamed Whitby's.) During the Carter administration, Mr. Schneiders finished the credits needed and received his Georgetown degree.

In addition to his son, survivors include his wife of 48 years, the former Marie Hartnett; a son, Luke; three sisters; a brother; and four grandchildren.

Mr. Schneiders had a lifelong fascination with the craft of political polling, including how questions were framed and how results were interpreted. He believed his time as a bartender was a bonus.

"Owning a bar teaches you about business. Tending bar teaches you about people — who they are, what they believe or feel, and why," he said in a 2020 interview with an education-focused news site, the 74. "To be a good bartender, you have to be a good listener, which involves the same skill set as being a good opinion researcher."

IN MEMORIAM

DOWNS

JULIA CLARK DOWNS
In Memoriam
May 25, 1978 - October 5, 2021
Beloved daughter, sister, mother, niece, cousin and friend.
We miss you each and every day.

DEATH NOTICE

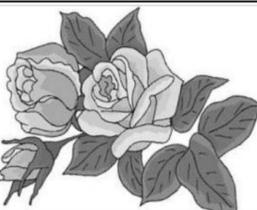
HARAB

ELLIOT PETER HARAB
Of Silver Spring, MD passed away on May 23, 2024. Loving brother of Charles Harab (Borrie) and uncle of Matthew and Julie Harab. Graveside services will be held 11 a.m. Sunday May 26, 2024 at National Capitol Hebrew Cemetery, 4708 Fabler Street, Capitol Heights, MD. In lieu of flowers, please make donations in Peter's name to the American Kidney Fund or the American Lung Association. Services entrusted to Sagel Bloomfield Danzansky Goldberg Funeral Care. www.sagelbloomfield.com

LAUENSTEIN



JOAN ANNE LAUENSTEIN
Joan Anne Lauenstein, 91, passed away peacefully on Monday, April 22, 2024. Born March 30, 1933 in Wilmington, DE, she is survived by her husband, Karl F. Lauenstein of Brunswick, ME; daughters Susan E. Lauenstein of Glen Ellen, CA and Jean-Marie Lauenstein of Laurel, MD; and daughter-in-law Karen E. Sanders of Laurel, MD. She is preceded in death by her sister, Annette Y. Ruskowski. Joan was well known for her culinary skills, her curiosity, and adventurous spirit. A Memorial Service will be held at St. Philip's Episcopal Church, 522 Main Street, Laurel, MD 20707, on Friday, June 7, 2024, at 11 a.m.



DEATH NOTICE

SEVI

ISRAEL SEVI
On Thursday, May 23, 2024, ISRAEL SEVI of Washington, DC. Devoted father of Iris (Adam) Bashein. Dear brother of Nisim, Avram (Meredith) and Yosi Sevi and Klara (Eleanor) Rush. Graveside funeral services will be held on Sunday, May 26, 2024, 1 p.m. at Mt. Lebanon Cemetery, Adelphi, MD. Memorial contributions may be made to Magen David Adom - AFMDA, <https://afmda.org>. Arrangements entrusted to TORCHINSKY HEBREW FUNERAL HOME, 202-541-1001.



DEATH NOTICE

ACKER



PATRICIA ANN ACKER (Age 54)
Patricia (Patty) A. Acker, age 54, of Hanover, MD, went home to our Lord on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. Patty was the beloved daughter of Rita and the late Robert Acker; sister of Amy Kearse and husband, Brad, and Mike Acker and wife, Maria; and cousin of Karen Carbone; aunt of Zack, Jacob, Jackson, Olivia, Dallan and Kace. Relatives and friends may call at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 12319 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, from 10 to 11 a.m., followed by interment at Gate of Heaven Cemetery. For further information visit Collins Funeral Home website. www.COLLINSFUNERALHOME.com

When the need arises, let families find you in the Funeral Services Directory.

To be seen in the Funeral Services Directory, please call paid Death Notices at 202-334-4122.

The Washington Post

DEATH NOTICE

WRIGHT



ORA THERESA WRIGHT
Ora Theresa Wright, the youngest child of Bunyon and, where she dedicated over 30 years of service before retiring in 1997. In her retirement, Ora enjoyed traveling, fulfilling her lifelong dream of becoming a realtor, and spending time with her family and friends. Cherishing her memories behind her two children, Tonya and Dwayne; her four grandchildren, Brandon, Brian, Hayden, and Avery; two great-grandchildren, Micah and Nia, as well as numerous other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her six siblings: three brothers, Mckinly "Biggie" Bugg, Jerome, and Zonnie Bugg, and three sisters, Muriel Hester, Lela Alice Howard, and Bertha Brown. Relatives and friends are invited to pay their respects at Fort Lincoln Funeral Home, 3401 Bladensburg Rd., Brentwood, MD 20722 (301-264-5090). The viewing is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 29, 2024, with the funeral service to follow immediately at 10:30 a.m.

DEATH NOTICE

ATCHISON



JOHN WILTON ATCHISON JR.
Beloved father and grandfather passed away May 16, 2024. Born on August 12, 1930, in Washington, DC, the son of John W. Atchison Sr. and Erma Atchison (nee Yost). John leaves behind four children and six

grandchildren: Jay (Jackie) their girls Cristen, Carly and Cassidy, Jan; Alan; his son Sean; Julie (Craig), their children Tyler and Caitlyn.

John graduated from Central High School in 1950, Columbia Technical Institute in 1956 and was drafted into the United States Army in 1951 where he served honorably in the renowned 5th Regimental Combat Team as a machine gunner in the Korean War.

A talented dancer, John met his beautiful wife Evelyn in Washington, DC at a social dance, and they married in 1958. John worked for the Navy Department for over 36 years, retiring in 1986. John was a talented artist and had a knack for poetry. He also enjoyed roller skating, golfing, traveling around the world, taking cruises, and enjoying many beach vacations with his family.

Family and friends will be received at Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home, 9902 Braddock Road, Fairfax, VA from 12 to 1 p.m. Wednesday, May 29. Services will be from 1 to 2 p.m. in their chapel, followed by interment at 2 p.m. at the Fairfax Memorial Park.

DEATH NOTICE

BROWN

FREDERIC J. BROWN III LTJG (RET.)

Frederic J. Brown III, Lieutenant General, US Army (Ret.), known as Rick to his family and friends, passed away May 15, 2024 in Washington, DC. Born July 18, 1934 to Frederic Brown Jr. (USMA 1927) and Kathryn Richardson Brown at Ft. Sill, OK, he dedicated his life to Duty, Honor, Country.

After graduating as a distinguished cadet from the United States Military Academy West Point 1956, Rick married his beloved childhood sweetheart, Harriette Anne Upham. The Brown "team" was formed. Both chose service to country as Anne worked tirelessly to support military families at home and abroad, receiving the Department of the Army Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the highest Army Civilian Award, in 1989.

Rick was commissioned Armor. As the first Olmsted Scholar, he attended the University of Geneva in Switzerland. There he earned a Masters of Arts degree in Political Science, subsequently adding a Ph.D. His dissertation, Chemical Warfare: A Study in Restraints, was published by Princeton Press.

Rick retired from the US Army in 1989 having served 32 years in various command and staff assignments including both Cavalry and Infantry units in Germany, Viet Nam and the United States culminating as Chief of Armor, Commanding General Ft. Knox, KY and Commander of Fourth Army, Ft. Sheridan, IL. During his career Rick was awarded multiple US Decorations and medals including the Distinguished Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal with V Device (with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters).

Meritorious Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Air Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster) Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge and Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge. In 2010 Rick received the Distinguished Graduate Award from the United States Military Academy, class of 1956.

A distinguished author, Rick wrote several books, numerous articles, and papers on the challenges facing the US Army and the use of advance information technologies in training and leader preparation. While passionate about his service to Country and the US Army, he was equally devoted to his wife and family and enjoyed hiking, bicycling and travel.

Rick is preceded in death by his beloved wife Harriette Upham Brown and survived by his three daughters and seven grandchildren.

Anne and Rick will be interred at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The funeral service and interment will be held on Friday, August 23, 2024 at 10 a.m. in the Old Cadet Chapel. A reception will follow.

In lieu of flowers, Memorial contributions may be made to Army Emergency Relief, at <https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org/donate>.

JOSEPH CAWLEY'S FUNERAL HOME

RONALD J. CAULEY "Ron"
On May 5, 2024, Ronald J. Cauley (Ron), age 92, reunited with his wife, Peggy, who predeceased him in 2021. Born November 1, 1931, Ron grew up in a small town in upstate New York with his parents, younger brother Keith and his twin brother Donald. Captain of the football team and an honors graduate, Ron earned a scholarship to Notre Dame, where he studied mechanical and nuclear engineering and developed a lifelong love for the Fighting Irish.

Following his college graduation, Ron moved to the Washington, DC area. He began his career working for the Navy, designing submarines as a civilian engineer. In 1954, he was set up on a blind date with a non-Catholic 4'11" 19-year-old named Peggy. They married within the year. Tragedy struck when they tried to build their family and discovered that each carried a cystic fibrosis gene. They had five children: Kevin, Karen, Sharon, Tim and Mary. Karen and Mary died at birth, Kevin died in college, and Tim, who kept defying his life expectancy, died shortly

after turning 50 years old. In the unimaginable and heartbreaking pain of losing their progeny, they leaned into their faith, creating spiritual alchemy through their volunteer work as grief counselors.

Ron continued his work at the Navy, rising through the ranks and retiring in the senior executive service. Throughout his career, he was careful with his finances but always generous in his giving, especially to family members, paying for college tuition for great grandchildren and dozens of family get-aways. In addition to their volunteer work as grief counselors, they were active participants in the Church, and raising children, he and Peggy traveled extensively across six continents.

In their 65th year of marriage, Peggy died; since then, Ron has lived quietly, increasingly leaning on Sharon while regaling her with stories about Peggy, "the boss," and falling in love with wife all over again. He liked to read, but he loved to participate in the games of his lives lived. We hope this one passes his critical eye. He continued to enjoy his white wine and chocolate, watching pickleball from the community gazebo, football games, golf tournaments, and a series of television shows saved on DVR. He loved his big family, weekly poker games, and dogs - probably Teddy the most. He sat outside enjoying his cigar, keeping a stack of dog treats for any passing pup, and looked forward to the Sundays that Teddy would visit.

Along with friends and neighbors from his community in Falls Run, Ron leaves behind his beloved daughter, Sharon; and her husband John, his daughter in law Claire; his grandsons, John III, Kevin and his wife Erica, Jimmy and his wife Christy, Tim and Demory; his great-grandchildren, Kyristin, Lexi, Ashlin, Justin, JP, Drew, Nico and Matty, and his first great-great-grandchild, Waylon.

No services planned.

STIDHAM
spent 33 years as a pilot, flying many different aircraft and travelling all over the world with work and family. He retired from United in 1999 with a final flight, which his family also took, to Paris and back on the 777.

In addition to flying and family, Sim enjoyed metal detecting for civil war relics, church, jazz music, tennis, and crossword puzzles. Sim played many instruments including the trumpet, trombone, flugelbore, and piano.

With his love of jazz music and his incredible musical ability he founded the St. Thom Cats jazz band in the late 1970s with members of the St. Thomas United Methodist Church. The St. Thom Cats grew into a church and community icon and continued under his leadership more than 18 years. They are still active today and will play at his service.

Sim has always been a loving and generous man who cared about the well-being of others.

Sim is survived by his wife Helen; his daughters, Ashby (Jim) and Audra (Matt); and three grandchildren, Sarah, Jodi and David.

A celebration of life will be held on June 15, 2024, at 1 p.m. at St. Thomas United Methodist Church in Manassas, Virginia, reception to follow immediately thereafter in the fellowship hall of the church.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to any of the following:

Your local Hospice organization: St. Thomas United Methodist Church, 8899 Sudley Road, Manassas, VA 22110; All About Wildlife Rehab and Release, Inc., c/o Karen Pratzner, 9055 Baker, Manassas, VA 22112; <https://allaboutwildliferhandrelease.org>

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Rain, sun vie for primacy

We're kicking off the unofficial start of summer in proper style. It may rain for a sixth straight weekend, but we'll also see a good deal of sun and highs shooting for the mid-80s. Any showers and storms should hold off until at least late afternoon, first developing over the mountainous west. Better odds arrive in the evening, but a line of storms may be decaying on approach.



Today



85° 67°
FEELS*: 92°
CHNCE PRECIP: 40%
WIND: SSE 4-8 mph
HUMIDITY: High

Sunday



86° 70°
FEELS: 93°
P: 40%
W: SSE 6-12 mph
H: Very High

Monday



81° 67°
FEELS: 83°
P: 95%
W: S 7-14 mph
H: Very High

Tuesday



82° 61°
FEELS: 84°
P: 20%
W: WNW 7-14 mph
H: Moderate

Wednesday



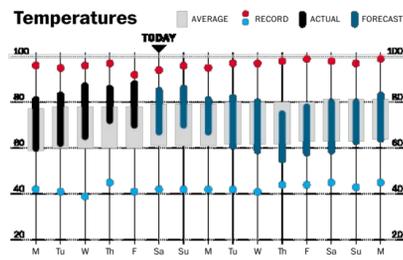
80° 59°
FEELS: 81°
P: 70%
W: WNW 7-14 mph
H: Moderate

Thursday



75° 55°
FEELS: 76°
P: 15%
W: NW 8-16 mph
H: Low

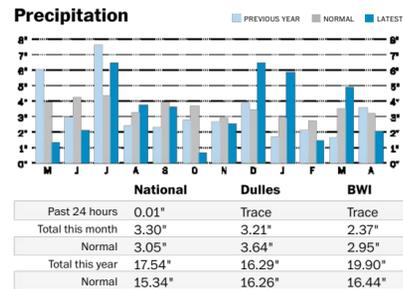
OFFICIAL RECORD



Statistics through 5 p.m. Friday

	National	Dulles	BWI
High	88° 3:30 p.m.	87° 3:55 p.m.	85° 4:00 p.m.
Low	70° 5:00 a.m.	66° 2:37 a.m.	65° 6:00 a.m.
Normal	78°/60°	77°/55°	77°/56°
Record high	92° 1964	90° 1964	93° 1933
Record low	41° 1905	36° 1963	41° 1963

Difference from 30-yr. avg. (National): this month: +2.1° yr. to date: +3.1°

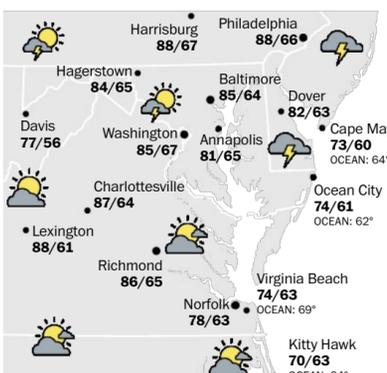


	National	Dulles	BWI
Past 24 hours	0.01"	Trace	Trace
Total this month	3.30"	3.21"	2.37"
Normal	3.05"	3.64"	2.95"
Total this year	17.54"	16.29"	19.90"
Normal	15.34"	16.26"	16.44"

Moon Phases: May 30 Last Quarter, June 6 New, June 14 First Quarter, June 21 Full.

Solar system: Sun Rise 5:48 a.m. Set 8:23 p.m., Moon Rise 11:05 p.m. Set 8:06 p.m., Venus Rise 3:42 a.m. Set 4:29 p.m., Jupiter Rise 5:35 a.m. Set 7:54 p.m., Saturn Rise 2:31 a.m. Set 1:56 p.m.

REGION



Pollen: High Grass, High; Trees, Moderate; Weeds, Low; Mold, High.
Air Quality: Moderate Dominant cause: Ozone.
UV: Very High 8 out of 11+.

Blue Ridge: Today, showers, a heavier thunderstorm this afternoon; thunderstorms can bring localized damaging wind gusts. High 69 to 78. Winds south-southwest 6-12 mph. Tonight, mainly clear, but increasing cloudiness in southern parts.

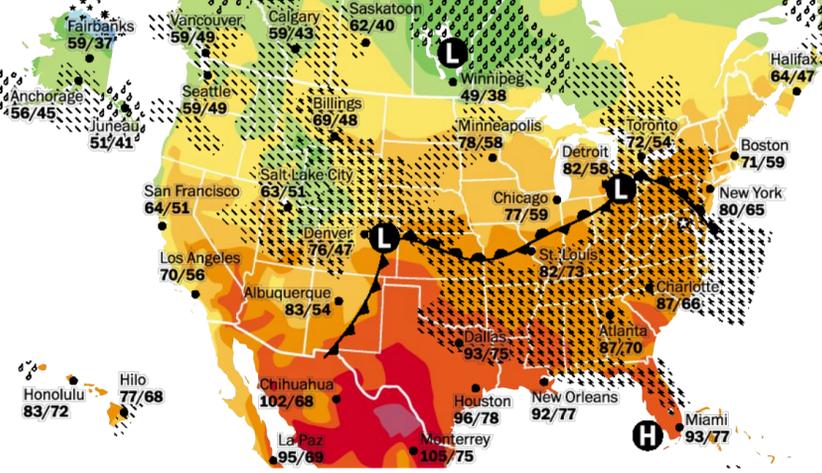
Atlantic beaches: Today, fog in the morning, mainly cloudy; humid in the south this morning. High 74 to 78. Winds east-northeast 6-12 mph. Tonight, low clouds. Low 60 to 64. Winds south-southeast 4-8 mph. Sunday, sunny; however, some clouds in the north.

Waterways: Upper Potomac River: Today, fog in the morning, mostly cloudy, a thunderstorm in the afternoon. Wind south 4-8 knots. Waves 0-1 foot. Lower Potomac and Chesapeake Bay: Today, fog in the morning, mostly cloudy. Wind south 4-8 knots. Waves 0-1 foot on the Lower Potomac; 1-2 feet on the Chesapeake Bay. River Stages: The stage at Little Falls will be around 4.10 feet today, with no change of 4.10 Sunday. Flood stage at Little Falls is 10 feet.

Today's tides (High tides in Bold)

Location	4:23 a.m.	9:49 a.m.	5:26 p.m.	10:31 p.m.
Washington				
Annapolis	12:25 a.m.	7:24 a.m.	2:12 p.m.	7:13 p.m.
Ocean City	3:39 a.m.	9:31 a.m.	3:24 p.m.	9:55 p.m.
Norfolk	5:34 a.m.	11:32 a.m.	5:21 p.m.	11:49 p.m.
Point Lookout	3:12 a.m.	10:38 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	8:52 p.m.

NATION



Yesterday's National High: Zapata, TX 108° Low: Daniel, WY 14° for the 48 contiguous states. World High: Jacobabad, Pakistan 122° Low: Antipaputa, Russia 8° excludes Antarctica.

NATIONAL	Today	Tomorrow	Des Moines	79/62/pc	72/56/t	Oklahoma City	90/70/t	91/62/c	WORLD	Today	Tomorrow
Albany, NY	82/60/t	86/64/s	Detroit	82/58/t	79/64/t	Omaha	81/59/pc	74/57/t	Addis Ababa	81/56/s	81/55/s
Albuquerque	83/54/s	84/56/s	El Paso	94/67/s	92/64/s	Philadelphia	88/66/t	85/65/t	Amsterdam	65/51/sh	70/54/sh
Anchorage	56/45/c	56/44/c	Fargo, ND	71/47/pc	75/52/pc	Phoenix	91/69/s	94/73/s	Auckland	60/55/pc	62/53/sh
Atlanta	87/70/t	91/72/pc	Hartford, CT	84/60/pc	85/63/pc	Pittsburgh	83/61/t	86/63/pc	Baghdad	100/76/pc	101/76/pc
Austin	96/74/pc	99/73/s	Honolulu	83/72/sh	84/72/c	Portland, ME	70/54/pc	68/52/pc	Bangkok	92/81/t	93/82/t
Baltimore	85/64/s	85/68/t	Houston	96/78/pc	93/78/s	Portland, OR	64/51/pc	71/50/s	Beijing	62/55/c	84/55/pc
Billings, MT	69/48/t	64/46/pc	Indianapolis	81/60/t	77/64/t	Providence, RI	75/55/s	76/58/pc	Berlin	77/55/pc	76/58/sh
Birmingham	88/72/t	92/75/c	Jackson, MS	90/73/t	91/73/pc	Raleigh, NC	88/66/t	90/72/pc	Bogota	69/51/t	68/50/c
Bismarck, ND	67/43/pc	67/48/sh	Jacksonville, FL	93/70/pc	94/72/pc	Reno, NV	73/48/pc	80/53/pc	Brussels	67/53/c	69/52/sh
Boise	68/42/pc	71/49/pc	Kansas City, MO	80/65/pc	79/57/t	Richmond	86/65/c	89/70/pc	Buenos Aires	54/45/c	53/45/c
Burlington, VT	73/59/t	75/56/pc	Las Vegas	90/67/s	93/71/s	Sacramento	72/49/pc	82/52/pc	Cairo	91/70/s	96/81/c
Buffalo	79/56/t	80/68/pc	Little Rock	88/75/t	92/68/t	St. Louis	82/73/pc	86/65/t	Cape Town	78/67/t	78/67/sh
Charlotte	87/66/t	91/70/pc	Los Angeles	80/61/s	71/56/pc	St. Thomas, VI	90/80/pc	90/81/pc	Copenhagen	69/57/pc	69/56/sh
Cheyenne, WY	66/43/t	67/42/pc	Louisville	81/69/t	91/68/t	Salt Lake City	63/51/t	72/49/pc	Dakar	84/74/pc	86/75/c
Chicago	77/59/s	77/58/t	Memphis	85/75/t	89/72/t	San Diego	66/60/sh	67/58/pc	Dublin	59/50/c	60/49/sh
Cincinnati	77/59/s	77/58/t	Miami	93/77/t	93/81/t	San Francisco	64/51/pc	66/53/pc	Edinburgh	63/52/c	58/49/t
Cleveland	80/60/t	86/69/pc	Minneapolis	78/58/s	65/54/r	San Juan, PR	91/79/sh	93/79/t	Frankfurt	72/51/pc	75/53/pc
Dallas	93/75/t	98/75/pc	Nashville	87/69/t	92/71/t	Seattle	59/49/pc	59/50/sh	Geneva	69/50/c	73/56/c
Denver	76/47/t	73/49/pc	New Orleans	92/77/pc	93/78/pc	Spokane, WA	62/41/c	62/47/pc	Ham., Bermuda	79/71/pc	78/73/s
			New York City	80/65/s	81/64/t	Syracuse	86/60/t	83/64/pc	Helsinki	79/56/c	75/53/c
			Norfolk	78/63/c	81/67/s	Tampa	93/76/pc	94/79/pc	Ho Chi Minh City	96/80/t	96/81/t
						Wichita	85/67/t	88/58/c	Hong Kong	85/79/t	89/81/t



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Lenore G. Rubino 202-262-1281



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Margot Wilson 202-549-2100



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Alyssa Crilley 301-325-0078



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A familiar face showed up at the White House for President Biden's fete for an African nation's leader



SHURAN HUANG FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

A SURPRISE GUEST AT DINNER FOR KENYA

BY MAURA JUDKIS AND ROXANNE ROBERTS

Scanning the guest list for Thursday's state dinner for Kenyan President William Ruto, there seemed to be a notable omission: Where was America's most famous citizen of Kenyan descent, a man who happens to live only two miles from the glass-ceilinged pavilion erected on the White House's South Lawn for the sixth state dinner of the Biden administration? ¶ We're talking, of course, about former president Barack Obama, who had met with Ruto earlier that day at Blair House, where the pair reportedly discussed climate change and security challenges in Africa. ¶ "Didn't mean to mess up your shine there," Obama said, as he seemed to step on Ruto's shoe while going in for a hug. ¶ Obama might have said the same thing in reference to the dinner that night. He managed to avoid being listed as an official invitee — actor Sean Penn and philanthropist Melinda Gates were on the list — but Obama was there nonetheless: Photographers captured his arrival, and he was spotted mingling at the dinner, but President Biden called him out in his toast for leaving early.

SEE STATE DINNER ON C2

MUSIC REVIEW

Gastr del Sol's music still refuses to be put in a box

BY CHRIS RICHARDS

When Luke Combs took his fine and faithful cover of Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car" all the way to the top of last summer's country charts, he was still only number two. That's because the greatest re-creation of "Fast Car" belongs to Jim O'Rourke, the avant-garde musician who performed Chapman's live-or-die ballad onstage in Japan circa 2002, expanding it into a 33-minute black hole manifestation. Loosely ambling through the song's original verses before slipping into an existential drone of strings and electronics, O'Rourke's live take on "Fast Car" evoked either a universal consciousness or the void — or maybe a suggestion that those two ideas are one and the same.

Either way, it stands as one of the most overwhelming pop remakes ever conceived, and for me, hearing it continues to trigger two additional nostalgia spasms. The first involves my original exposure to "Fast Car," replaying it over and over in my mom's speed-limit-abiding Oldsmobile when she bought the cassette after Chapman won all of her Grammys in 1989 — not unlike how Combs has described listening to the song on repeat as a child in his dad's pickup. Maybe "Fast Car" is a song about breaching the unknowability of your parents.

As for the second nostalgia twitch, it's for the music of Gastr del Sol, the '90s Chicago duo that O'Rourke joined with David Grubbs, formerly of the terrifically mutated punk bands Squirrel Bait and Bastro. O'Rourke's version of "Fast Car" — artful, alert, epic, metamorphic — does plenty of the astonishing things that Gastr del Sol's music was doing just a few years earlier. On the group's 1996 masterstroke, "Upgrade & Afterlife," the pair seemed to be mapping the space between John Cage and John Fahey, Luc Ferrari and Van Dyke

SEE MUSIC REVIEW ON C2

Cher, and more than a fair share of glitz, at Cannes gala

BY JADA YUAN

CAP D'ANTIBES, FRANCE — "Are you ready for Cher? Are you ready for Cher?" Demi Moore asked the crowd at Amfar's 30th anniversary gala in Cannes.

"Hell yeah! Of course!" shouted the investment bankers in tuxedos (including a crystal-encrusted denim version) and the women in gowns so huge that waiters had to direct traffic around them. "It's f---ing Cher!!!" shouted a man in a white dinner jacket who probably arrived by yacht.

"I thought you were going to be drunk, but you're clearly not," Cher told the crowd, after warming them up with "Walking in Memphis." She'd been good friends with Elizabeth Taylor, who'd co-founded the HIV/AIDS research nonprofit. "She was a gift to all of us," Cher explained, and the reason she was there performing, because she would have done anything to help support her friend's cause. She then launched into "Waterloo."

But the 78-year-old singer, who was sporting flowing blond tresses and an oversize sparkling purple suit, had more in store for the crowd — and it involved smoke machines. Cher turned back time all the way to "Moonstruck" and re-emerged, surrounded by shimmying background dancers, in long black curls and a black sparkly see-through leotard situation that revealed a tiny thong underneath — and performed hits like "If I Could Turn Back Time" and "Believe."

"I love a wig change! We just experienced an epic moment together!" Colman Domingo told The Post while leaving the gala tent.

Few events are as ridiculously opulent, with such clarity of purpose, as this one, in which stars such as Moore, Kelly Rowland, Michelle Yeoh and Heidi Klum mingle with wealthy art collectors and Euro elite. While the gala takes place during the Cannes Film Festival, attendees are more likely to be in town just for this, or this

SEE CANNES ON C4



ELIZABETH FRANZT/REUTERS

At top, Kenyan President William Ruto and first lady Rachel Ruto join President Biden and first lady Jill Biden at the state dinner. Above, the first ladies at the arrival ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House.

Jill Biden abandons neutrality for glamorous democracy

BY RACHEL TASHJIAN

On Thursday night, Jill Biden dressed in one of her most audacious ensembles to date: a true-blue gown by Sergio Hudson, for the state dinner for Kenya. It wasn't navy blue, or midnight blue, or neutral in the way the first lady generally prefers. It was a bolder blue, a sapphire blue, a pure shot of chromatic patriotism.

The glittering bare-shouldered column was embellished with sequins, crystals and bugle beads, with a slightly awkward wrap of sturdy satin around the arms and bodice.

Hudson, the designer, is a 40-year-old Black American whose runway shows are spirited celebrations of the female body, and whose clothing the first lady has worn before. A strand of blue gems hung around her neck.

FASHION

With the dress's swaggering lines and intense tone, Biden looked almost like she wanted to conjure the Statue of Liberty.

President Biden, thank goodness, decided to wear a bow tie with his tuxedo this time — he went with a tie for last month's state dinner, for Japan — and the look was more traditional and, again, sturdy. Stand-

SEE FASHION ON C3



EVYLYN HOCKSTEIN/REUTERS

Bill Clinton also attended dinner

STATE DINNER FROM C1

"Jill and I are honored to have you here," the president said to Ruto, as well as "many members of the African diaspora. One just left. Barack." The crowd laughed.

Why the exit? Maybe he was just trying not to mess up anyone's shine. But the former president's presence — along with that of former president Bill Clinton and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton — added presidential star power to one of Biden's splashiest events as he enters campaign season, and perhaps made up for more than a decade of inattention to African nations while European allies were feted with dinners.

Obama never hosted an African country for a state dinner. The last one honored Ghana in 2008, hosted by President George W. Bush. And the last White House state dinner for Kenya was in 2003, also under Bush, who toasted Kenya's president at the time, Mwai Kibaki, with a Swahili proverb about persistence, while the White House served rack of lamb on tables with sculptures of giraffes made entirely of sugar.

Thursday's dinner celebrated 60 years of diplomatic relations between Kenya and the United States, and there seemed to be an effort to make up for lost time. After all, Biden had previously pledged to visit Africa, and time to make good on that promise seemed to be running out. Asked about those plans during Ruto's arrival, the president punted. "I plan on going in February, after I'm reelected," he said.

So the Bidens rolled out the red carpet for approximately 500 guests, including business leaders, typical Washington types and a few random celebrities, such as actor Wilmer Valderrama, "American Pie" singer Don McLean and author Barbara Kingsolver.

White House chef Cristeta Comerford prepared a chilled green tomato soup with Vidalia

onions and white balsamic vinegar for an appetizer, and a take on surf and turf for the main course: lobster poached in butter, paired with smoked short ribs and baby kale atop a sweet corn puree. For dessert, White House pastry chef Susie Morrison molded white chocolate into the shape of tiny baskets, which contained banana ganache, nectarine paste, raspberries, peaches and floral accents.

"This is where we do the step and repeat," said Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) to his mother, Carolyn, as they arrived at a gantlet of journalists. "This is where we show them how sexy we are."

Filmmaker Michaela Coel, wearing a red-and-gold gown she said was given to her by a Sudanese friend, marveled at the scene of her first state dinner: "The closest I've had to this is 'Hamilton' the musical."

And "Star Trek" actor LeVar Burton, also attending his first state dinner, said he was "looking forward to seeing whose table we're at."

Asked to describe the political climate right now in just one word, he grimaced and replied, "Just one? Can I swear?" He continued: "I would say it's fraught. Fraught" — and here he paused — "with possibility."

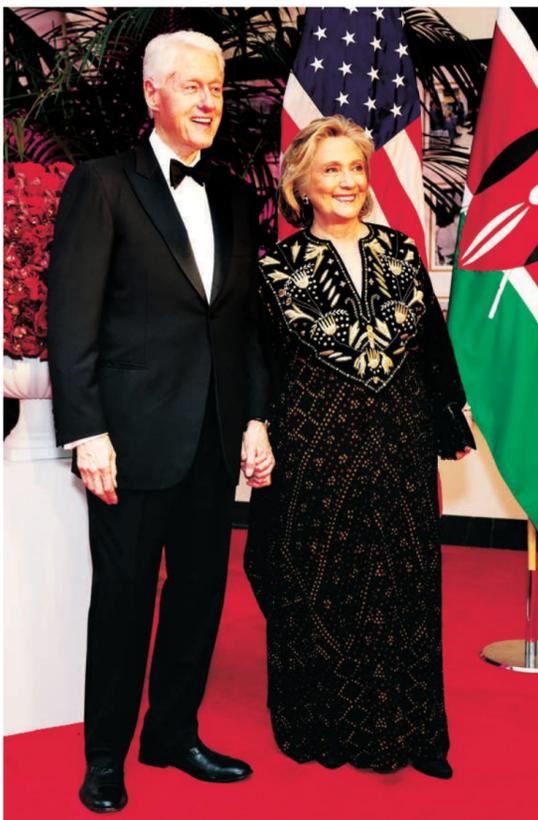
The Kenya-U.S. partnership, on the other hand, is ripe with possibility, Biden and Ruto emphasized throughout Ruto's visit.

On Tuesday the Rutos visited Atlanta, where actor Steve Harvey gave them a tour of Tyler Perry Studios. (Perry had a scheduling conflict. He posted on Instagram that he was "heartbroken" to miss the opportunity.) The couple also attended the opening of the first U.S. store for the Vivo fashion group, an East African fashion label that originated in Kenya.

Then the Rutos headed to Washington, where the presidents met to discuss the "Nairobi-Washington Vision," a debt-relief initia-



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Former president Barack Obama, right, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken; Vice President Harris and second gentleman Doug Emhoff; former president Bill Clinton and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton.

tive for "high-ambition countries" in Africa to receive financial support. During a joint news conference Thursday afternoon, the two presidents touted technological developments from "Silicon Savannah" and took questions from Kenyan and American reporters about Kenya's U.S.-backed assistance in Haiti.

Ruto has a few surface similarities with Biden's competitor for the presidency. He is a hotelier. And his fashionable daughter,

Charlene Ruto, has been criticized for founding the Office of the First Daughter, leading some Kenyans to nickname her "Quickmart Ivanka," referencing a discount Kenyan supermarket. (Her office does not use public funds, she later clarified.)

The first ladies have more in common. Both educators, Jill Biden and Rachel Ruto on Thursday visited a technical school and a Johns Hopkins cancer research center, where Ruto called Biden "my sister and friend." And the two made a lovely pair on the portico of the White House — Biden in a beaded blue Sergio Hudson gown with a satin sash-like sleeve, and Ruto in a ruffled pewter peplum column gown. After the leaders and their spouses posed in the portico, three of Ruto's daughters — Cullie, June and Stephanie, dressed in red, black and gold gowns — joined their parents for pictures with the presidents. Charlene's absence from the trip seemed to disappoint some of her fellow citizens. A Kenyan news outlet reported that people on social media were asking, "Where is our fashionista Charlene?"

There were other fashionistas. Vice President Harris and presidential granddaughter Naomi Biden Neal both opted for caped gowns — forest green for the former, emerald green for the latter. Caroline Wanga, chief executive of Essence Magazine, wore her hair in a stunning red crown, accenting her flared gown with a traditional print fabric. Melissa Biden, Hunter's wife — he skipped the red carpet — opted for a cream column dress that contrasted her chunky black heels.

Bryan Rafanelli, the administration's go-to party planner ever since Biden Neal's wedding, helped social secretary Carlos Elizondo design the decor: tables swathed in purple sequined cloth, topped with African orchids and some of the first lady's favorite roses, peonies and ranunculi in

complementary shades of magenta and pink. (And rented china: Historic White House china can't be used for outdoor events, Elizondo said.)

Shelves holding more than 1,000 candles illuminated the walls of the pavilion, which offered views of the night sky through a glass ceiling. Luckily, rain earlier in the day had cleared up by the time guests began to arrive.

In his toast, Ruto praised the U.S. hospitality, saying his family had been treated with "manifest generosity. This is a warm, wonderful, beautiful place, and we are blessed who have been privileged to visit."

Still, there were a few signs that there was room for improvement on the hospitality front. As arrivals filtered into Booksellers Hall in the White House, an announcer could be overheard, via C-SPAN, struggling to pronounce the names of African guests.

"Nyong'o? I'll give it a shot," the announcer said before entrepreneur Isis Nyong'o Madison walked the red carpet. (Actress Lupita Nyong'o, her cousin, wasn't on the guest list.) Later in the arrivals, another Kenyan guest could be overheard complaining that her name was mispronounced. "Do it again!" she implored the announcer. He did not.

For the evening's entertainment, the Howard Gospel Choir and country singer Brad Paisley were tapped to perform before and after the dinner, "to honor President and first lady Ruto's love of gospel and country music," Jill Biden said at a preview to the dinner. (As deputy president in 2019, Ruto wore a cowboy hat to a concert by Sir Elvis, a popular Kenyan country singer.)

"I can't wait to see what kind of audience this is," said Paisley as he arrived at the dinner, wearing a big white cowboy hat. "I'm going to start with 'American Saturday Night,' but then all bets are off."

After a brief introduction by Jill Biden, Paisley said he was delighted to be there in the "fanciest greenhouse," then launched into the aforementioned song, an ode to the American mixing bowl.

"Everywhere has something they're known for, although usually it washes up on our shores," the lyrics go, referencing such pleasures as French kisses, Italian ice, Canadian bacon and Brazilian leather boots. For Thursday night's performance, Paisley changed one lyric that referenced the former U.S.S.R. to "a Ukrainian flag hanging up behind the bar." Attendees cheered. He changed another lyric to reference the White House instead of New York. But in his song about all of the various cultures that make up America, he cited nothing whatsoever from Africa.

"I thought: Let's do the songs that speak to everybody no matter where you're from," Paisley said at the conclusion of the song, "And I realized, when it comes to Kenya and country music, it's just — every song works."

Unreleased music from '90s duo is hard to describe but awesome to hear

MUSIC REVIEW FROM C1

Parks. And then they stopped, dissolving their partnership in 1998, with Grubbs embarking on a prolific solo career (don't miss his exquisite 1998 album, "The Thicket"), and O'Rourke doing the same (not to mention his six-year stint as the fifth member of Sonic Youth).

A quarter-century later, here's "We Have Dozens of Titles," a new Gastr del Sol album of unreleased studio recordings and live performances from the group's five-year run that feels thrillingly true to form. "Quietly Approaching" has those Cagelike pianos where

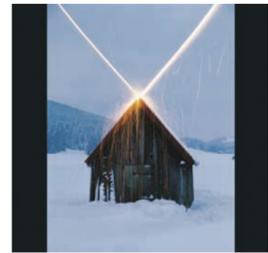
the chords just hang in space. "At Night and at Night" finds Grubbs describing impossible scenes of "thunder in the movie theater" in his Kentucky ASMR nano-drawl. "Dead Cats in a Foghorn" has a wandering acoustic guitar melody that brims with secret rigor while the music's margins fill with sonar blips and the sound of a broom sweeping a floor. Altogether, it feels awesomely evocative, like something out of a film more real than your life.

Here's what this album doesn't feel like: a closet cleaning, a cash scraping, a signal flare that the band is getting back together. And if you're hoping that decades

of distance might give us a better contextual handle on a group that always seemed to exist outside of trends and time, sorry about that, too. People defaulted to calling Gastr del Sol "post-rock" back in the day, and more precise language has since failed to emerge. And while this band influenced many — Ryley Walker, Black Midi, Hiss Golden Messenger, Joan of Arc, Animal Collective — it hasn't always been easy to hear exactly how. Let's take it all as proof of Gastr del Sol's success and significance. Music that doesn't necessarily need to be understood absolutely deserves to be heard.



JAMES CRUMP



DRAG CITY RECORDS

LEFT: Jim O'Rourke, left, and David Grubbs of the group Gastr del Sol in 1998. ABOVE: The cover of Gastr del Sol's "We Have Dozens of Titles."

the **GUIDE** to the Lively Arts

SHOW NAME	DATES & TIMES	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS	PRICE	ADDITIONAL
THEATRE					
MOMIA EN EL CLOSET Eva Peron's Return	Thru June 9 Thurs - Sat at 8 pm Sun at 2 pm	Eva Peron's afterlife pulses with rhythms of samba, bachata, tango, and tarantella in this dark political musical comedy that will leave you breathless.	GALA Theatre 3333 14th Street NW 202-234-7174 www.galatheatre.org	\$25-\$50	In Spanish with English surtitles
MUSIC - ORCHESTRAL					
Symphonic Metamorphosis Mahler 4 + Hindemith featuring David Chan & Ying Fang	June 2, 2024 at 4 PM	The Apollo Orchestra presents the final in concert in the 2024-2025 season with principal conductor David Chan and soprano Ying Fang. The program will feature Hindemith's Symphonic Metamorphosis of themes by Carl Maria von Weber and Mahler's Symphony No. 4 in G major.	Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center 7995 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910 https://www.apolloorchestra.com/events/june2/	Free	Free parking

The Guide to the Lively Arts appears: • Sunday in Arts & Style. deadline: Tues., 12 noon
 • Monday in Style. deadline: Friday, 12 noon • Tuesday in Style. deadline: Mon., 12 noon • Wednesday in Style. deadline: Tues., 12 noon
 • Thursday in Style. deadline: Wed., 12 noon • Friday in Weekend. deadline: Tues., 12 noon • Saturday in Style. deadline: Friday, 12 noon
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The first lady's bold, blue state dinner gown was pure sartorial patriotism

FASHION FROM CI

ing alongside Kenyan President William Ruto, in a classic tux, and Rachel Ruto, in a gorgeous steel-gray ensemble covered in ruffles and trimmed with a soft edge, the Bidens painted a picture of a first couple that embraces American tradition and imagery at a time when symbols of patriotism — especially the flag — have been used and abused by undemocratic forces.

State dinners are often a moment for “fashion diplomacy,” for the first lady and others to highlight the style and flavors of the guest country. Jill Biden has sometimes been so understated that she cedes the stage to her guest, almost like an act of black-tie humility.

But with her husband's reelection campaign kicking into higher gear, the first lady is shifting tactics. At the state dinner for Japan, she leaned into sartorial unity, wearing an ombre Oscar de la Renta dress — gentle blues

at the top, misty neutrals on the bottom — that seemed to urge a viewer's eye toward the splashier bright blue gown worn by the Japanese prime minister's wife, Yuko Kishida. The effect was visually gracious.

Kenya presented a special visual opportunity for the Bidens. Clothes are clearly more central to the culture and economy in Kenya than they are in the United States. President Ruto has made several efforts to revitalize the country's domestic apparel business, and in April, he announced an \$11 million deal to boost exports of Kenyan textiles to the United States. As a part of their trip abroad, the Rutos stopped on Monday at the new Atlanta location of a Kenyan fashion boutique, Vivo Fashion Group. Rachel Ruto's style is notable and vivid: She wears bright-colored fabrics in well-considered silhouettes. Dressing in Kenyan clothes is an expression of her husband's agenda.

Their visit also provides the

Bidens with an opportunity to speak to Black voters, whom President Biden has traditionally pursued and whose waning attention he is hoping to recapture for the election.

The gown by Sergio Hudson had a gem-like hue, with a wrap effect that recalled the Statue of Liberty.

Jill Biden veered from her blue strategy once, when she greeted Ruto and his wife on the tarmac as they arrived Wednesday in Washington. The first lady wore a satin yellow dress by the French brand Rochas, with a pair of Dior slingbacks. Biden wears color frequently, but it's usually blue or pink. Wednesday's more

unusual hue, a deep and rich saffron, stood out, suggesting she shares Rachel Ruto's ease with bright fabrics. Rather than clashing, it gelled with Ruto's green-and-red printed dress, which had a bow at the neckline. (The first lady's Dior heels were a miss — \$1,050 heels with a logo and a brand name just look silly. Blame it on too much “quiet luxury” talk.)

Who knows whether their teams are trading texts about color palettes, but Ruto's style is well-documented, and Jill Biden could make an educated guess at what would look good next to her.

Otherwise, she has been remarkably on message: blue, blue, blue. She wore blue at the Wednesday press preview for the state dinner. On Thursday morning, as the Bidens welcomed the Rutos in an official ceremony, she wore a little periwinkle skirt suit with a shrunken portrait collar. That look is always going to recall Jacqueline Kennedy and

her American prototype of glamorous democracy. Next to Ruto, who wore a wonderful black ruffled dress decorated with teal and pink flowers, Jill Biden looked like a postcard of a classic American welcome.

Other attendees at the state dinner dressed in Kenyan regalia — a celebratory and frankly optimistic vision in a dour political climate. The actress Michaela Coel looked radiant in a red and gold dress that she said belonged to a Sudanese friend. Caroline Wang, the chief executive of Essence Ventures, wore a printed ensemble with a fitted bodice, her hair braided into a red threaded crown studded with cowrie shells. Marc Morial, the former mayor of New Orleans, wore a tie printed with the Kenyan flag. And Enoch T. Ebong, the director of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, said her dress, scattered with beautiful circular forms, was by a Nigerian designer.

Others seemed to embrace the

opportunity to jazz up their usually staid formalwear: Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) in a green and brown geometric print ensemble and a large scrolling necklace, and Hillary Clinton in a gold and black printed caftan. (Perhaps she's reinterpreting the coastal grandmother for Westchester.) The evening's entertainer, country singer Brad Paisley, wore a big white cowboy hat that competed in width and volume with the enormous white bow on the shoulder of his wife's dress (1980s maximalism and cowboy hats — thank you, Beyoncé, for showing us country music can do both!). LeVar Burton and Al Sharpton looked so sharp that you should take a picture of them to your tailor the next time you need a suit fitted.

But for Jill Biden, this was not a night for looking frivolous. Blue is the color of stability, sturdiness and, of course, the Democratic Party. She was wearing her own polling projection for November.

Why couple up if you're already happy alone?



Carolyn Hax is away. The following first appeared March 31, 2010, and has been lightly edited.

Hi, Carolyn: I keep hearing you shouldn't be in a relationship unless you're perfectly happy without one. But if you're totally happy being alone, why would you ever want to be in a relationship? I'm not being facetious, I really don't get it. Relationships are hard work, and they require a lot of selflessness.

— Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania: On the happy-alone part: You can be perfectly happy with your sandwich and chips, but still feel lucky when someone says, “I have an extra cookie — want it?”

On the hard-work-and-selflessness part: Getting the cookie can move you to say, “Would you like some chips?” even though they're your favorite chips.

This is profoundly easier to execute, obviously, when it involves chips and cookies rather than hometowns, family, faith, life visions and goals, careers, sex, money, ideals, health, dignity, and everything else that gets thrown into the hopper of coupled life.

But while the execution gets complicated, the concept stays the same: When you're complete without someone, you're in a better position to see whether a partner enhances your happy life or weighs it down. When you have a void to fill, it's hard to be that selective.

When someone enhances your life, by definition the sacrifices you make are for something you

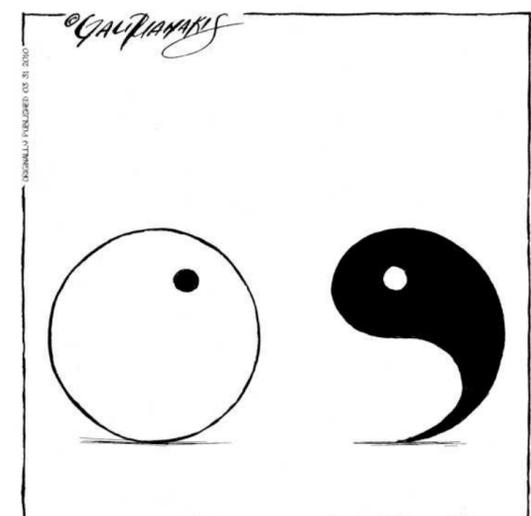


ILLUSTRATION BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

want even more. And when your favorite chips sound better than the offered cookie, then your basic “No, thank you” will do.

The problem is when you feel the ache for something else despite a dedicated effort to live your life on your terms.

Loneliness for companionship isn't just a switch you flip off when you want.

But finding companionship isn't a switch-flip, either. There's just no viable alternative to the goal of making your own happiness anyway, since the other choices are to seek companionship for the sake of a warm body (imagine waking up every day to someone who annoys you) or to dwell on what you don't have. All we can do is make the best of things we control.

Dear Carolyn: We just took in my husband's mom, who is pretty much an invalid. She has a million needs, she is cranky and she is making my life miserable. She is also making my 11-year-old daughter miserable. My husband has asked us repeatedly to be patient, but he is away from the house most of the time and has not handled a single one of her meals, medicinal regimens, diaper changes. After one month of this, I am more than ready to explore other options, but when I mention it, my husband gets

wildly offended. What do I do?

— Anonymous

Anonymous: Agree to drop the subject of “other options” on one condition: that your husband use vacation days to be in charge of his mom's care for a week. Two weeks, if he has enough days in the bank. You and he can't talk intelligently about this until he insists that you live.

Presumably, it gives him great peace of mind to know his mother is in your care, but I'm “wildly offended” that the person making this decision unilaterally is the one it affects the least. His peace of mind doesn't trump fairness to his daughter, to you or to his mom, whose needs apparently exceed one person's ability to meet them.

Write to Carolyn Hax at telme@washpost.com. Get her column delivered to your inbox each morning at wpo.st/gethax.

Join the discussion live at noon Fridays at washingtontimes.com/livechats.

LA TIMES CROSSWORD By Zhouqin Burnikel

ACROSS

- Signs of recognition
- Goddess symbolized by the peacock
- Folks who are totes inseparable
- Ropeless climbs
- Horn blast
- Drift apart
- Apt name for an optimist
- “The Secret Life of Bees” novelist
- Nonsense
- Times Square abundance
- Hides
- Cards
- Bug
- Inner ear?
- Starchy roots
- Element in some textured paint
- Ortiz of “Love, Victor”
- Perfect spot?
- Hole number?
- Ferret kin
- “The Marvels” actor Park ___joon
- “Allow Me to Retort” writer Mystal
- Alabama's state nut
- Words of admission
- Post in a studio
- Club alternative
- Inspiring device
- “Uh-uh”
- Sumps aboard
- Somewhat
- Pained cry
- Sought-after change
- “To Kill a Mockingbird” narrator
- PEBKAC issue
- Gas company known for its toy trucks

DOWN

- Commanders' org.
- Word in Montana's motto
- From overseas?
- Go after
- Cozy top
- Get by
- Skin care brand started in Paris in 1957
- Salon selection
- Dab dry
- Style guide?
- Treat similar to tostones
- Forward change
- thinkers?
- Film studio stock
- Beefiness
- Ones with very good manors
- Front money
- Unsettling stillness
- Food truck fare
- More alarming
- So far
- Brown hue
- Food source for grizzly bears
- Like some questions
- Taylor Swift's “I ___ You Were Trouble”
- Sparky the Sun Devil's sch.
- Red state
- Adèle ou Céline
- Carpenter with pipes
- Positive sign
- Quarters near a quad
- 54 Sparky the Sun Devil's sch.
- 55 Red state
- 56 Adèle ou Céline
- 57 Cheap tix option

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FRIDAY'S LA TIMES SOLUTION

S	O	C	A	L	N	F	L	M	I	K	E
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TELEVISION

5/25/24	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
4.1 WRC (NBC)	★ Sports	★ PaidProg.	★ The Wall		★ Weakest Link		★ Dateline NBC		★ News
4.2 WRC (IND)	Monk		Columbo		Columbo				Las Vegas
5.1 WTTG (Fox)	★ MLB Baseball	Los Angeles Dodgers at Cincinnati Reds (Live)					★ Fox 5 at 10		★ Fox 5
7.1 WJLA (ABC)	★ Wheel	★ Jeopardy!	★ NBA	★ Basketball	Boston Celtics at Indiana Pacers (Live)				★ 9 News
9.1 WUSA (CBS)	★ Retire...	★ PaidProg.	★ The Equalizer		★ 48 Hours		★ 48 Hours		★ 9 News
14.1 WFDC (UNI)	★ jTuCre...	★ jTuCre...	★ Pelicula					★ El	★ Noticiero
20.1 WDCA (MNTV)	★ FamFeud	★ FamFeud	★ Fox 5 News		★ FamFeud	★ FamFeud	★ FamFeud	★ FamFeud	★ ModFam
22.1 WMPY (PBS)	★ LuckyC...	★ Sara's	★ Real Crown		★ Movie: To Be Takei ...		★ Final Landing		★ Austin
26.1 WETA (PBS)	★ Acade...	★ Tell Me	★ Ken Burns: The Civil War				★ All New Rock		
32.1 WHUT (PBS)	★ Weeke...	★ Contrary	★ America Outdoors		★ The Shadow Between Us		★ Awada...		★ MyMusic
50.1 WDCW (CW)	★ Neighbor	★ Neighbor	★ I Am Steve McQueen				★ DC News Now		★ Seinfeld
66.1 WPXW (ION)	★ NWSL...	★ NWSL Soccer			★ NWSL...		★ NWSL Soccer		
A&E	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48		The First 48		First48		
AMC	(6:00) Movie: Beetlejuice (1988)	Movie: Uncle Buck ★★ (1989) An easygoing relative takes care of three children.					(:15) Movie: The Great Outdoors ★★ (1988)		
Animal Planet	North Woods Law	North Woods Law	North Woods Law		North Woods Law		North-Law		
BET	(5:00) Movie: Tyler Per...	Movie: Acrimony ★ (2018)					Movie		
Bravo	Below Deck	Below Deck	Below Deck		Below Deck		Below Deck		
Cartoon Network	Burgers	Burgers	Burgers	Burgers	American	American	American	American	Rick
CNN	CNN Newsroom	Vegas: The Story	Vegas: The Story		Vegas: The Story		Vegas: The Story		Vegas
Comedy Central	Movie	Movie: Just Go With It ★★ (2011)					Movie: We're the Millers (2013)		
Discovery	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!	Caught!
Disney	Big City	Big City	Movie: Ice Age ★★ (2002)		Ladybug		Ladybug	Ghost	Big City
E!	(5:30) Movie: Superba...	Movie: The Other Guys ★★ (2010)					Movie: Superbad (20...		
ESPN	College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)	College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)			College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)		College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)		SportCr (Live)
ESPN2	College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)	College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)			College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)		College Softball NCAA Tournament, Super Regional: Teams TBA (Live)		30 for 30 Shorts
Food Network	Guy's Grocery Games	Diners	Diners		Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners
Fox News	Weekend (Live)	Life, Liberty & Levin			One Nation		Saturday Night		Gutfeld!
Freeform	(:15) Movie: Wreck-It Ralph ★★ (2012) An arcade-game “bad guy” wants to be a hero.	(:20) Movie: Ralph Breaks the Internet ★★ (2018) Ralph and Vanellope find adventure inside the internet.							
FX	(5:30) Movie: Raya & the Last Dragon (2021)	Movie: Moana ★★ (2016) A once-mighty demigod and a teen sail across the ocean.					Movie: Mulan ★★ (2020)		
Hallmark	(6:00) Movie: A Picture of Her (2023)	Movie: Big Sky River: The Bridal Path (2023)					Movie: A Whitewater Romance (2024)		
Hallmark M&M	Garage Sale Mysteries				Garage Sale Mysteries		Garage Sale		
HBO	(5:40) Movie: A Star Is Born ★★ (2018)	Gaga Chromatica Ball					(:55) We're Here		Chromatica
HGTV	Beach	Beach	Hunt Int'l	Hunt Int'l	Hunt Int'l	Hunt Int'l	Hunt Int'l	Hunt Int'l	Hunt Int'l
History	Ancient Aliens	Ancient Aliens	Ancient Aliens		Ancient Aliens		(:05) Ancient Aliens		(:05) Aliens
Lifetime	(6:00) Movie: Girl Who Escaped: Kara Robin...	Movie: Cruise Ship Murder (2024) (P)					(:05) Movie: The Beach House Murders (2024)		
MASN	MMA	Fight Sports WCK			Fight Sports: In 60		Fight Sports: In 60		SportWrap
Monumental	(6:30) WNBA Basketball		Mystics		WNBA Basketball				Mystics
MSNBC	The Beat With	The Beat With			The Beat With		The Beat With		Ari Melber
MTV	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous
Nat'l Geographic	To Catch a Smuggler	To Catch a Smuggler	Border	Border	Border		To Catch a Smuggler		Catch...
Nickelodeon	(6:00) Movie: Boss Ba...	(:15) Fairly... Fairly Odd	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
NWSN	NewsNation (Live)	NewsNation (Live)	NewsNation (Live)		NewsNation (Live)		Crime Nation		
Paramount	(6:20) Yellowstone	Yellowstone	Yellowstone		(:35) Yellowstone		(:35) Yellowstone		
Paramount+Sho	(5:30) Movie: Forrest Gump ★★ (1994)	Movie: The Last Voyage of the Demeter ★★ (2023)			Movie: Talk to Me ★★ (2022)				
Syfy	(5:15) Movie: The Mummy ★★ (1999)	Movie: The Mummy Returns ★★ (2001) Imhotep's minions kidnap the O'Connells' precocious son.			(:55) Movie: ...		Movie: ...		
TBS	(5:15) Movie: Thor: Ra...	All Elite Wrestling: Collision (Live)					Movie: Thor: Ragnarok (2017)		
TCM	(6:15) Movie: A Farewell to Arms (1932)	Movie: Attack! ★★ (1956) A cowardly commander places his men in jeopardy.			Movie: Captains of the Clouds ★★ (1942)				
TLC	Doubling Down	OutDaughtered	OutDaughtered		OutDaughtered		OutDaughtered		7 Little
TNT	NHL on TNT Face Off (Live)	NHL Hockey Edmonton Oilers at Dallas Stars (Live)							Post-Game
Travel	Unexplained Files	Unexplained Files	Unexplained Files		Unexplained Files		Unexplained Files		Files
TruTV	NHL on TNT Face Off	NHL Hockey DataCast: Edmonton Oilers at Dallas Stars (Live)							Post-Ga...
TV Land	Mike	(:35) Mike	Raymond	Raymond	(:20) Raymond		Raymond	Raymond	Seinfeld
TV One	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTimes	GoodTim...	GoodTim...	GoodTim...	GoodTim...
USA Network	(:15) Movie: Captain America: The First Avenger (2011)	Movie: Captain America: Winter Soldier (2014)							
VH1	(5:30) Movie: Men in ...	Movie: Men in Black II ★★ (2002)					Movie: Men in Black 3 (2012)		
WNCB	WorldNe...	Paid Prog.	20/20				WJLNe...		WJLNe...

LEGEND: Bold indicates new or live programs ♦ High Definition Movie Ratings (from TMS) ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Fair ★ Poor No stars: not rated

This gala makes Hollywood look drab

CANNES FROM CI

plus the Monaco Grand Prix. Ask anyone which movies they've seen and liked, and the answer is likely to be "None."

There was so much diamond jewelry in the room that almost every starlet there, including Maria Bakalova — who plays Ivana Trump in the Cannes film "The Apprentice," about Donald Trump's years as a young real estate mogul — were accompanied by bodyguards the whole time.

"It's surreal. It's not Hollywood, right? It's something else," said Domingo. "You've got models, influencers and rich-ass people. You almost feel like you need to be a little smoked up [to experience this]."

By the time the night was over, a four-panel painting by Kenny Scharf had sold for 900,000 euros, and the total coffers of funds that would be going toward AIDS research easily numbered

several million.

At one point, Paris Jackson and model Winnie Harlow helped auction off a walk-on role in the yet-to-be-announced Season 5 of "Emily in Paris," which they said would start shooting in April 2025. The lot had been arranged by series creator Darren Star and someone paid 250,000 euros for the opportunity, plus a chance to attend the premiere of Season 4 in Los Angeles. The only catch is that Netflix hasn't greenlit Season 5, Variety reports.

The night also featured a fairytale-themed fashion show curated by French fashion editor Carine Roitfeld, with looks from brands such as Prada and Schiaparelli, paired with angel wings and devil horns that veered fashionably close to expensive Halloween rentals. (An investment banker/art patron bought the whole collection for 500,000 euros.) And Cher was preceded onstage by Nick and Joe Jonas.

"I think it's not just the party of the year, but probably the best party we've ever been to," said first-time attendee Magic Johnson, who went public with his own HIV diagnosis in 1991 — a move that was a huge part of lifting the stigma around the disease.

"Thirty-two years ago, you're going to be scared," he said. "Now we have one drug versus a [multi-drug] cocktail. It was basically a death sentence. You couldn't even have events like this, because everyone was scared. No one was educated enough."

But maybe, Domingo posited, the goal of a giant fundraising gala like this is to get to the point where you stop having galas.

"It's been 30 years, and that's 30 years too much," he said. "You almost hope it doesn't happen next year. It's wonderful all the money [Amfar] has raised for research. But what if it ends tonight? Wouldn't that be incredible? I think that would be the win."



Cher was one of the featured performers for Amfar's Cannes-adjacent gala, a glitzy fundraiser for the nonprofit HIV/AIDS research organization.

MOVIE DIRECTORY

DISTRICT

AMC Georgetown 14
3111 K Street N.W.

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
CC: 3:00
If (PG) 10:45AM
The Fall Guy (PG-13) CC: 1:00-7:30-10:30

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
CC: 10:30-1:50-5:15-8:40
Civil War (R) CC: 10:40-4:20-10:40

Challengers (R) CC: 12:30-5:20-7:00-10:30
If (PG) CC: 11:20-2:00-4:40-7:20-10:00

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 11:30-1:15-7:10-10:30
The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 11:00-12:10-2:45-4:20-9:40

The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)
CC: 5:30-7:50-10:10
The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare (R) CC: 1:30

Sight (PG-13) CC: 11:30-2:10-4:45-7:15-9:45
Babes (R) CC: 11:45-2:30-5:10-7:45-10:20

Back to Black (R) CC: 11:00AM
I Saw the TV Glow (PG-13) CC: 10:30-8:00

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
CC: 11:40-6:30-9:50-10:20
Challengers (R) CC: 3:30

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 4:30
Back to Black (R) CC: 4:30

The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)
CC: 2:20
Alamo Drafthouse Cinema - DC

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
11:30-3:15-7:00-10:45
Challengers (R) 11:45-3:15-6:45-10:00

If (PG) 10:30-4:45-7:15-10:45
The Garfield Movie (PG) 11:45-2:45-5:30-9:45

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) 10:45-6:15-10:15
Babes (R) 10:30-1:15-4:15-7:15-10:30

Back to Black (R) 11:30-10:10
I Saw the TV Glow (PG-13) 12:30-7:30-9:30

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
4:00-6:00-8:00
If (PG) 1:15

Back to Black (R) 2:45
I Saw the TV Glow (PG-13) 3:30

Challengers (R) 12:30-3:30-6:40-9:25
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

12:00-1:00-3:20-4:10-6:30-7:30-9:30
Avalon Theatre

5612 Connecticut Avenue
Farewell, Mr. Hoffmann (Adieu Monsieur Hoffmann) 1:45-7:15

The Old Oak 11:15-4:30
Back to Black (R) 11:30-2:15-5:00-7:45

Landmark
Atlantic Plumbing Cinema
807 V Street Northwest

The Fall Guy (PG-13) 7:30-10:10
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

1:00-2:00-4:00-5:00-7:00-8:00-9:30
Challengers (R) 1:20-4:20-7:10-9:50

If (PG) 4:10-6:30-10:00
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) 12:50-3:45-6:45-9:40

If (PG) 1:50
Landmark E Street Cinema

555 11th Street Northwest
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

12:00-1:00-3:15-4:15-6:00-7:00-8:00-9:00-10:30

Challengers (R) 1:45-5:45-7:45-10:30
Evil Does Not Exist 12:45-3:25-6:15

Babes (R) 12:25-1:30-5:30-7:15-10:00
Back to Black (R) 12:30-4:10-7:30-10:25

I Saw the TV Glow (PG-13) 1:15-3:45-7:20-9:45
Babes (R) 4:00

Regal Gallery Place
701 Seventh Street Northwest

The Fall Guy (PG-13) 9:50-1:35-4:40-7:20-10:10
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

3:30-7:00-10:30
Civil War (R) 11:30AM

Challengers (R) 1:40-4:50-7:40-10:50
If (PG) 10:50-12:50-4:40-6:40-10:20

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
10:20-11:00-12:30-1:00-1:30-2:00-2:30-4:00-5:00-6:00-6:30-7:30-8:30-9:30-10:00-11:00

The Garfield Movie (PG) 11:00
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) 2:50

The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)
6:30-9:15
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

8:00
MARYLAND
AF Silver Theatre

Collegiate Center
8833 Coleville Road

Hit Man (R) CC: 11:30AM
The Third Man (2016) (NR)

2:15-7:00
Point Break (1991) (R) 9:15

Vengeance Is Mine (1984)
11:45AM
Evil Does Not Exist 12:55-5:35-9:35

Hit Man (R) 1:50-4:15-6:40-9:00
Wildcat 3:05-7:25

Curse of the Demon (1957)
11:00AM
Cinema Paradiso (Nuovo Cinema Paradiso) (1988) (R)

CC: 12:30
AMC Academy 8
6198 Greenbelt Road

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
CC: 10:30-11:40-1:20-3:00-4:20-6:00-7:15-9:15-10:30

Challengers (R) CC: 10:10-4:10-10:00
If (PG) CC: 10:20-1:30-4:10-7:10-10:00

The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 10:30-11:40-1:20-3:00-4:20-6:00-7:15-9:15-10:30

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 11:00-1:00-4:00-6:40-9:40

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire (PG-13) CC: 1:10-7:20

Tarot (PG-13) CC: 6:30-9:00
The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)

CC: 11:10-2:10-4:30-7:00-9:30
The Garfield Movie 3D (PG)

CC: 10:00-12:45-3:30
AMC Annapolis Mall 11
1021 Annapolis Mall Road

The Fall Guy (PG-13) CC: 1:00-6:40-7:00-10:20
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

CC: 12:30-4:00-7:20-10:40
Challengers (R) CC: 11:10-10:10

The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 10:30-2:15-3:50-4:40-7:30-9:05-10:15

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 10:00-12:50-4:15-7:15-10:15

Sight (PG-13) CC: 11:20-1:50-4:20-6:50-9:20
The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)

CC: 1:20-3:40-6:00-8:30-10:50
Back to Black (R) CC: 10:00-11:25

Babes (R) CC: 12:00-2:35-5:10-7:45-10:45
I Saw the TV Glow (PG-13)

CC: 10:15-11:30
The Garfield Movie 3D (PG)

CC: 1:15-6:30
If (PG) CC: 10:10-12:40-2:00-3:30-6:20-9:00

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
CC: 10:20-11:30-2:50-4:50-6:10-8:10-9:30

Challengers (R) CC: 11:00-10:10
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

CC: 12:00-1:30-2:50-4:50-6:10-8:10-9:30
AMC Columbia 14
10300 Little Patuxent Parkway

The Fall Guy (PG-13) CC: 1:05-4:05-7:05-10:05
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

CC: 11:00-2:30-6:00-9:20
Challengers (R) CC: 12:15-3:15-7:05-9:40

If (PG) CC: 11:10-12:35-1:50-3:10-4:30-7:10-9:30

The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 10:10-12:35-4:10-6:00-9:10
Kung Fu Panda 4 (PG) CC: 11:25-1:50

AMC DINE-IN Rio Cinemas 18
9811 Washington Center

The Fall Guy (PG-13) CC: 10:45-7:30-8:30-9:30-10:00-11:00
1:45-4:45-7:45-10:45

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
CC: 11:30-3:00-6:30-10:00
Civil War (R) CC: 7:30-10:20

Challengers (R) CC: 11:30-2:45-6:30-9:15
If (PG) CC: 10:30-11:30-1:15-4:00-5:00-6:45-7:45-9:30

The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 12:00-2:45-5:30
Kung Fu Panda 4 (PG) CC:

12:00-2:30-5:00
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 11:45-3:15-6:45-7:45-10:10; 8:30

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire (PG-13) CC: 12:30-3:30

Tarot (PG-13) CC: 3:45-6:20-8:45
Sight (PG-13) CC: 11:15-4:30-7:30-9:30

The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)
CC: 10:15-12:45-3:15-5:45-8:15-10:45

Babes (R) CC: 10:45-1:30-4:15-7:00-9:45
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga: The IMAX Experience (R)

CC: 4:00-7:30-11:00
Back to Black (R) CC: 10:30-1:30-4:30-7:30-10:30

I Saw the TV Glow (PG-13)
CC: 2:15-10:30
Blue Angels (G) CC: 10:45-1:15

The Garfield Movie 3D (PG)
1:00-3:45-6:30
Love Me If You Dare 6:30-10:00

Three Old Boys 10:30-1:30
Raju Yadav 10:00-10:15

The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 11:00-1:45-4:30-7:15-9:15
Sight (PG-13) CC: 2:00

AMC Magic Johnson Capital Center 12
800 Shoppers Way

The Fall Guy (PG-13) CC: 12:45-3:45-6:45-9:45
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

CC: 7:10-10:15
If (PG) CC: 1:00-2:15-3:40-4:50-7:25-10:00

The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 12:00-3:50-6:30-10:20
Kung Fu Panda 4 (PG) CC:

12:05-8:30
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 1:45-2:30-5:10-6:45-9:15

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire (PG-13) CC: 6:15-9:00

Sight (PG-13) CC: 1:15-4:30-7:30-9:30
Tarot (PG-13) CC: 2:00-9:10

The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)
CC: 12:05-2:30-5:00-7:30-10:00

Challengers: Frozen Empire (PG-13) CC: 1:25-4:15

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga: The IMAX Experience (R) CC: 12:25-3:45-7:10-10:30

The Garfield Movie 3D (PG) CC: 2:35-7:45
If (PG) CC: 10:10-12:40-2:00-3:30-6:20-9:00

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
CC: 10:20-11:30-2:50-4:50-6:10-8:10-9:30

Challengers (R) CC: 11:00-10:10
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

CC: 12:00-1:30-2:50-4:50-6:10-8:10-9:30
AMC Montgomery 16
7101 Democracy Boulevard

The Fall Guy (PG-13) CC: 10:00-1:00-4:00-7:00-10:00
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

CC: 10:15-12:00-7:00-10:30
Challengers (R) CC: 6:30-9:45

If (PG) CC: 10:30-12:45-3:30-6:15-9:00
The Garfield Movie (PG) CC:

10:00-1:45-4:45-7:30-10:15
Kung Fu Panda 4 (PG) CC: 11:00-1:30-4:00

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 10:30-1:45-3:45-7:10-10:15

Sight (PG-13) CC: 12:00-3:15-6:30-9:45
The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)

Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)
4:55-8:20
Challengers (R) 10:10-1:20-4:30-7:40

The Garfield Movie (PG)
11:30-2:15
Sight (PG-13) 11:00-1:50-4:40-7:30-10:20

Tarot (PG-13) 10:05-1:45-4:15-6:45-9:15
Babes (R) 11:15-1:55-4:35-7:15-9:55

Back to Black (R) 10:00-4:20-10:40
I Saw the TV Glow (PG-13)

10:50
The Garfield Movie 3D (PG)
10:15-4:00-9:10

Love Me If You Dare 12:30-3:40-6:50-10:00

Turbo 1:00-7:20
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

CC: 12:10-3:35-7:00-10:25
If (PG) CC: 10:05-10:20-10:50-11:10

1:05-1:35-1:55-3:50-4:20-4:40-6:35-7:05-7:25-9:45-10:45-10:05

The Garfield Movie (PG) 10:00-10:30-12:55-1:15-3:40-6:25-6:45-9:30

Cinopsis Gathersburg
629 Center Point Way

The Fall Guy (PG-13) 10:00-1:15-4:30-6:00-11:15
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

10:30-11:30-2:15-3:15-6:00-7:00-9:45-10:45
If (PG) 10:45-1:45-4:30-7:30-10:30

The Garfield Movie (PG) 10:00-11:00-1:00-2:00-4:00-5:00-7:00-8:00

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) 11:45-3:30-7:15-10:45

Sight (PG-13) 12:00-3:00-6:00-10:15

The Strangers: Chapter 1 (R)
11:15-2:00-4:45-7:45-10:30

Back to Black (R) 9:00
The Garfield Movie 3D (PG)

11:00
Greenbelt Cinema
123 Centenary

If (PG) 5:15-7:45
Evil Does Not Exist 5:00-8:00

Landmark
Bethesda Row Cinema
725 Woodmont Avenue

The Fall Guy (PG-13) 1:45-4:25-7:20-10:05
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

1:00-4:00-5:00-7:00-10:00-10:00
Challengers (R) 1:15-4:10-7:10-9:55

If (PG) 12:30-3:30-6:30-9:00
The Garfield Movie (PG) 1:30-2:30-4:30-7:15-9:35

Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) 12:45-3:50-6:45-9:45

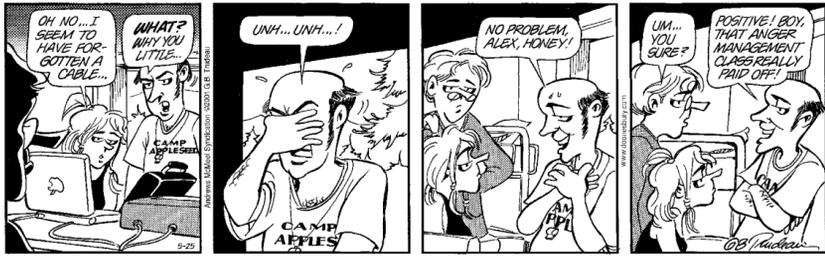
Back to Black (R) 1:10-3:45-6:40-9:30

Landmark at Annapolis Harbour Center
2474 Solomons Island Road Unit H-1

The Fall Guy (PG-13) 1:15-4:00-6:45-9:30
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (R)

1:30-2:30-4:40-7:10-9:20
Civil War (R) 4:30

CLASSIC DOONESBURY



PICKLES



BRIDGE

BOTH SIDES VULNERABLE

NORTH
 ♠ AK108
 ♥ J9862
 ♦ 8
 ♣ AJ10

WEST
 ♠ 7643
 ♥ 74
 ♦ 72
 ♣ 76432

EAST
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ 53
 ♦ AQJ1094
 ♣ K85

SOUTH (D)
 ♠ J95
 ♥ AKQ10
 ♦ K653
 ♣ Q9

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1NT	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Opening lead — ♦7

“Simple Saturday” columns focus on basic technique and logical thinking.

If you held today's miserable West hand (a “Yarborough,” with no honors), could you maintain a “bridge face” and not betray disgust or boredom?

North-South got to six hearts after East had overcalled in diamonds. West led a diamond, and East took the ace and returned the queen. Declarer played low, ruffed in dummy, drew trumps and saw that he could win 12 tricks by winning a finesse in either black suit.

South figured that East had the king of clubs for his two-level overcall, but West might have the queen of spades. And since West didn't seem to have lost interest in the proceedings, South let the jack of spades ride. Down one.

South relied on his “table presence” — nothing wrong with that — but he missed the best technical play: He cashes the A-K of spades. If the queen didn't fall, South would return a trump to his hand and finesse in clubs. He gets two chances instead of one.

DAILY QUESTION

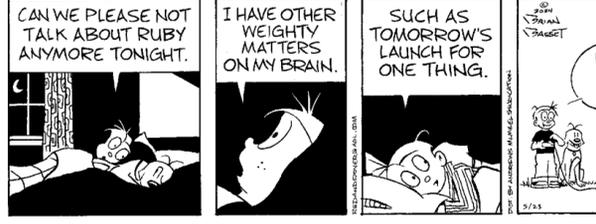
You hold:
 ♠ AK108♥J9862
 ♦8♣AJ10

You open one heart, your partner responds one spade, you raise to two spades and he next bids three diamonds. What do you say?

ANSWER: Partner's three diamonds is a try for game (at least). He asks you to bid game with any maximum raise or with a decent raise that has help for diamonds. Your hand was almost worth a jump to three spades at your second turn, hence you must jump to four spades now.

— Frank Stewart
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RED AND ROVER



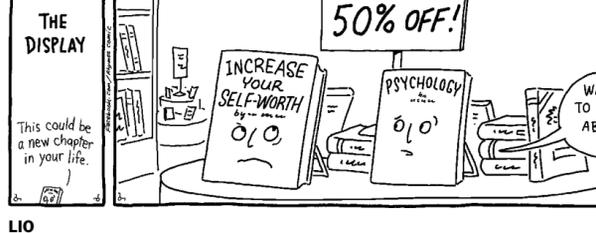
FRANK AND ERNEST



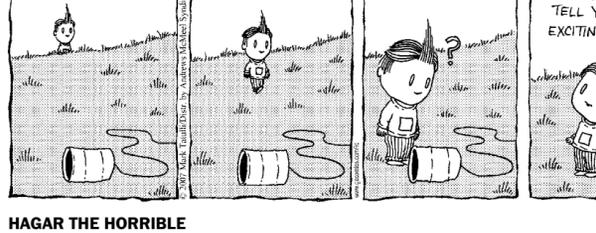
CLASSIC PEANUTS



RHYMES WITH ORANGE



LIO



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



BLONDIE



SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

			1 8		4			
	7		2 4					
					9			1
		9			6 2			
1		6						7
	5 8				3			
9	3							
		3 9						6
2	6 5							

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

SCRABBLE GRAMS

How to play: Complete the crossword puzzle by looking at the clues and unscrambling the letters to solve the BONUS.

DOUBLE BONUS: The circled letters can be unscrambled to form two different BONUS answers.

CLUE: Roller
 ○○○○○○

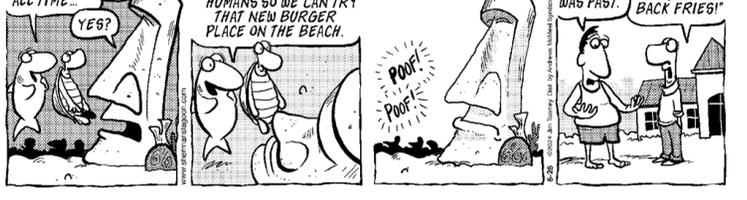
CLUE: He lived to be about 70
 ○○○○○○

PAR SCORE 160-170
 BEST SCORE 219
 FOUR RACK TOTAL
 TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. “Blanks” used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition. SOLUTION TOMORROW

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgames@gmail.com

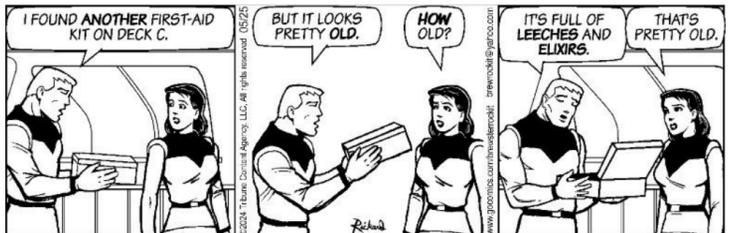
SHERMAN'S LAGOON



CURTIS



BREWSTER ROCKIT: SPACE GUY!



JUMBLE CROSSWORDS by David L. Hoyt

How to play: Complete the crossword puzzle by looking at the clues and unscrambling the letters to solve the BONUS.

DOUBLE BONUS: The circled letters can be unscrambled to form two different BONUS answers.

CLUE: Roller
 ○○○○○○

CLUE: He lived to be about 70
 ○○○○○○

ANSWERS: 1-A FUELZ 2-FRAMEWORK 3-COMPLETE, GENERAL 4-HABITUAL ACTION

ANSWERS: 1-RAOCFT 2-UAESV 3-MSTAR 4-UYALSM

ANSWERS: 1-ANLFSO 2-HCSSAIS 3-ROVLAEI 4-USOMCT

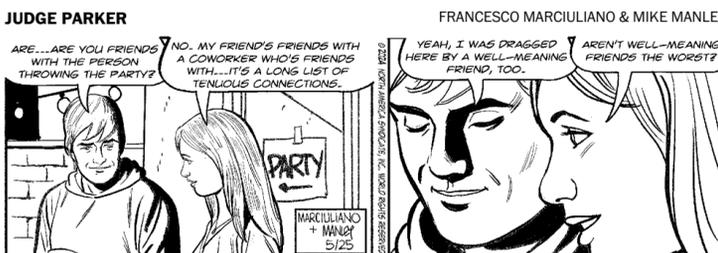
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HOROSCOPE

BIRTHDAY | MAY 25

You are intelligent and compassionate. You are also multitasking. However, you guard your privacy and your personal feelings. This year is more laid-back, a gentler pace. Take time to rejuvenate and replenish your energy. Focus on relationships and people who have your back. Why settle for less?



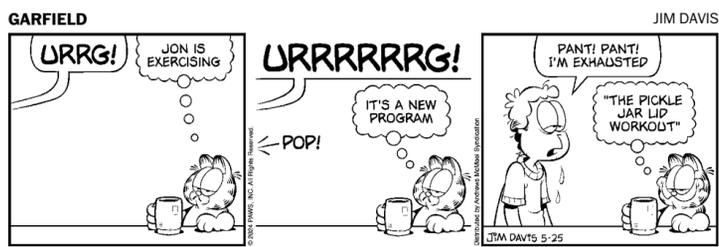
Moon Alert: Avoid shopping or making important decisions from 10:15 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. today. After that, the Moon moves from Sagittarius into Capricorn.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19). You might feel obsessed about shopping for something today. "I have to have it!" If this is the case, please be aware of the restrictions of the Moon Alert. By the same token, you might feel equally determined about a moneymaking idea or working in your job.



TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20). Today you have passionate feelings about many things! You will feel passionate about your relationships. You will also feel intensely passionate about many other issues as well. Be aware of this in case you go off the deep end.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20). Secrets are a strong theme for your day for some reason. You might be keeping a secret from someone. Or possibly, you think that someone is keeping a secret from you. Obviously, secret love affairs will be par for the course.



CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22). Your interactions with a friend or a member of a group will not be casual today. In fact, they might be quite intense. You might have strong feelings about what this person says or does, or you might have strong feelings about this person.



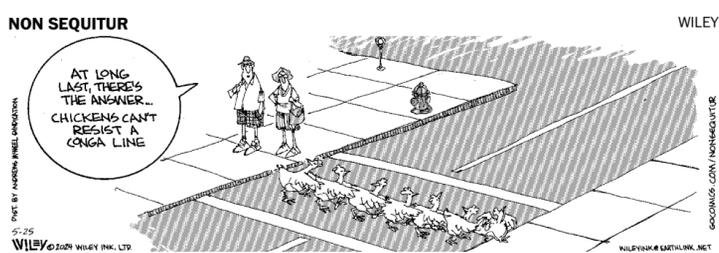
LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22). You might develop a strong crush on a boss or someone in authority today. You almost have that feeling that was meant to be - "written in the stars!" Don't get too carried away. Many people have intense, even obsessive feelings today because Venus is lined up with Pluto.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22). Tread carefully if you're involved in discussions about politics, religion, racial issues or ideologies, because people are entrenched in their point of view today. This means they can't listen to the other side.

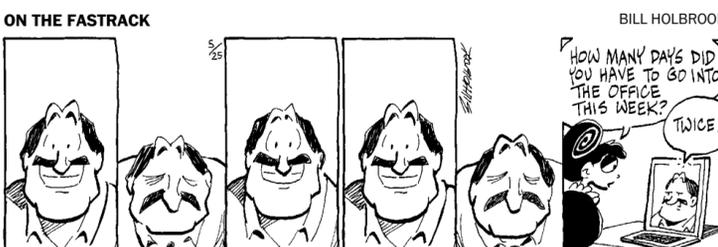


LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22). If you have to decide how to divide something, share an inheritance or deal with loans and mortgages, you will have strong feelings today. You have a definite point of view.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21). All your dealings with those who are closest to you will be intense today, because to you, everything matters. Issues are black-and-white. But the truth is, most issues are actually a graduated scale of gray.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21). This is an interesting day! You might feel very strong about something that is work-related. Possibly, a work-related romance has you emotionally in its thrall. Or you have strong feelings about a precious pet.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19). Romantic passion will be strong today. No question. However, this same passion might be expressed through the arts, the entertainment world or exciting sports events and enjoying playful times with children.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18). You might entertain at home today or do something to beautify your home or buy something attractive for where you live. If so, you have very strong feelings about what you want to achieve.



PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20). A new relationship might begin with someone today that is intense. You might feel attracted to this person as if it were destined. No matter what you're doing today, you might also feel obsessed about achieving your goals.

— Georgia Nicols

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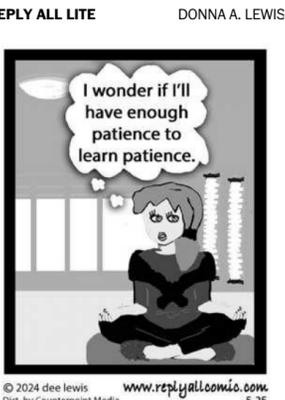
PREVIOUS SUDOKU SOLUTION

1	4	5	9	7	3	8	6	2
2	6	3	1	5	8	9	4	7
9	7	8	2	6	4	5	3	1
3	5	9	8	2	1	4	7	6
4	1	7	5	9	6	3	2	8
8	2	6	3	4	7	1	5	9
7	8	1	6	3	5	2	9	4
6	3	2	4	8	9	7	1	5
5	9	4	7	1	2	6	8	3

PREVIOUS SCRABBLEGRAMS SOLUTION

E	R	A	S	U	R	E	57
R	E	D	I	S	H	86	
S	U	P	E	R	B	10	
V	O	H	C	H	E	69	

PAR SCORE 145-155 TOTAL 222



Without joy or their star, the Pacers appear lost



Candace Buckner

BOSTON — When they're at their best, the Indiana Pacers are a hoops confectionary. They're a tasty alternative in a professional game that offers too

much staleness in iso ball, which often relies on the brightest star with the biggest contract taking the shots. Though the Pacers now have their own resident all-NBA player in Tyrese Haliburton, do not confuse them for a solo operation. Instead, they're a balm for basketball.

When they're on, they're a delight to behold. The ball zips around, finding shooters and drivers, whoever's open, no matter the size of his contract. They pile up the assists because sharing means winning, and they've won so much while playing their relentless, chaotic pace that they've made it this deep into the calendar for the first time in a decade. As fun and egalitarian as they make basketball look by trusting the pass and believing in one another, they largely spent the regular season as a poor man's Golden State Warriors. Nobody — not even the most die-hard Pacers fan — could have predicted this team would evolve into an Eastern Conference finalist.

But two games into their big

SEE BUCKNER ON D3

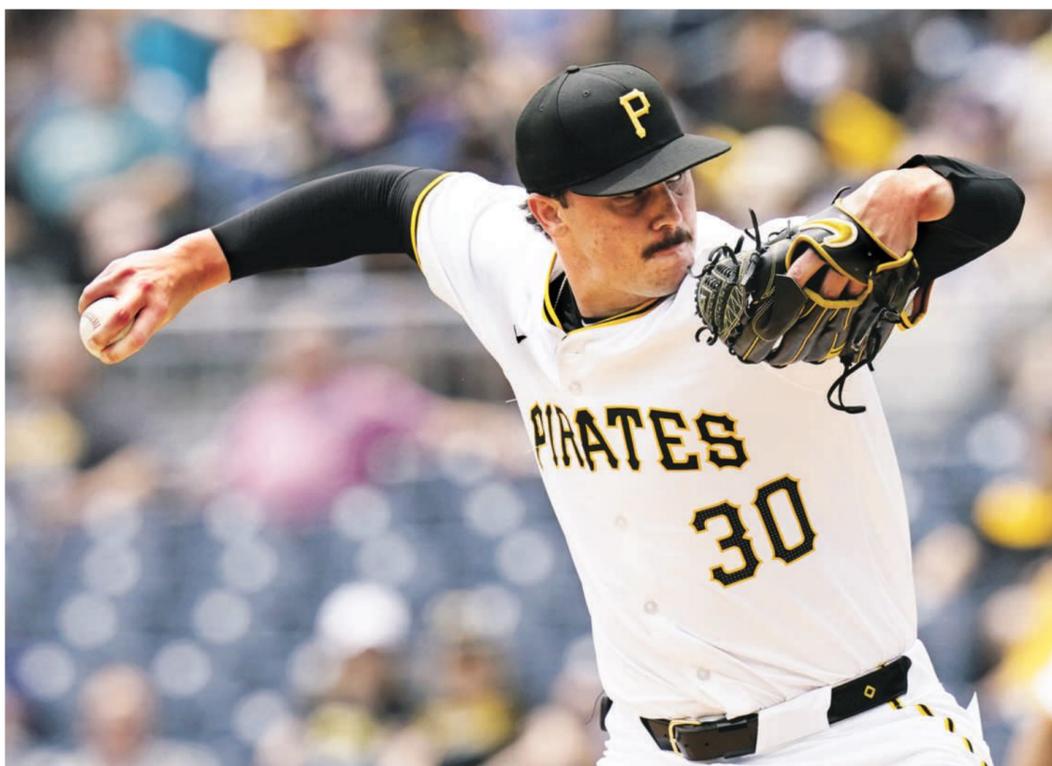
Game 3: Celtics at Pacers
8:30 p.m., ABC

NBA PLAYOFFS

Luka Dončić's three-pointer in the waning moments lifts Dallas to a 2-0 lead over Minnesota. **D3**

COLLEGES

Before the Maryland men could reach the lacrosse Final Four, they had some things to overcome. **D3**



MATT FREED/ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I trust myself over pretty much anyone, any lineup," said Paul Skenes, who has a 2.25 ERA over the first three starts of his career.

A throwback ace

The No. 1 pick less than a year ago, Pirates' Skenes is already a must-see

BY CHELSEA JANES

PITTSBURGH — By the unlikely standards he has set for himself during his first year of professional baseball, Thursday afternoon was a quiet one for Pittsburgh Pirates right-hander Paul Skenes. In his third major league outing, the most polished and promising pitching prospect in recent memory threw six innings of one-run ball against the San Francisco Giants. He struck out only three batters in the process. He hit 100 mph with his fastball only four times.

The joke, of course, is that any starting pitcher allowing one run in six innings in his third major league outing would be happy with those results. But Skenes, his manager and his teammates later

acknowledged that those six innings against an experienced lineup were nowhere near his best.

"Breaking ball command [was not there]," Skenes said. "I made do with it, but it was mostly relying on the fastball today, more than slider, change-up like we had the last couple weeks. But you have to compete with what you have."

So this, it seems, is Skenes on a bad day, on a day when all he had was a fastball and his unique "splinker" splitter-sinker. This is Skenes on a day he has to "grind," as Manager Derek Shelton put it, referring to the fact that seven people reached base against him and one of them even scored.

"It's the big leagues," Shelton said, using a phrase managers often use when rookie pitchers encounter

SEE SKENES ON D5

Nationals stay loose and snap out of funk

NATIONALS 6,
MARINERS 1

BY SPENCER NUSBAUM

Before Friday's game at Nationals Park, Washington Manager Dave Martinez offered a few simple fixes for his slumping team: Keep it loose — and stop chasing breaking balls and start sitting on fastballs.

For a team that had lost nine of its past 11 games, executing anything of late has been a challenge. But the Nationals were able to follow these tips and, with a big boost from starter MacKenzie Gore, beat the Seattle Mariners, 6-1.

"Like I said earlier, we've got to get the ball in the zone and take good aggressive swings," Martinez said. "For the most part, they did that all night."

The degree of difficulty to what seemed like simple baseball guidance? High. Yet the win couldn't have come at a better time — to start an arduous nine-day stretch that includes the first-place Mariners, the ever-dangerous Atlanta Braves and the first-place Cleveland Guardians. And they earned it after trailing just two pitches into the game following J.P. Crawford's leadoff home run.

The Nationals kept it loose and got a master class from Gore, who went seven innings, yielding just one run on four hits and a walk to go with eight strikeouts.

What did loose look like? It looked like CJ Abrams stepping to the plate to start the bottom of the fourth after Mariners starter George Kirby had thrown just 24 pitches over the previous three innings. It looked like Abrams waiting on a heater that pitchers don't seem to throw him much anymore. When he got one, he placed it to the opposite field for a single. Thus emerged a hip-grating celebration and, perhaps more important, a big smile. Relaxed, indeed.

SEE NATIONALS ON D5

Mariners at Nationals
4 p.m., MASN2

Spirit shows how much it's grown since opener

SPIRIT 3,
REIGN 2

BY ELLA BROCKWAY

Nine weeks ago, the Washington Spirit opened its season against the Seattle Reign with a result to forget. Playing without star Trinity Rodman, the new-look Spirit conceded an early penalty and never found its footing.

When the Spirit hosted the Reign in the rematch Friday night, the fortunes were flipped. A strong first half, powered by rookie midfielder Croix Bethune, helped Washington earn a 3-2 win before 11,551 at Audi Field.

The Spirit (8-3-0) won for the fourth time in five games and moved into second place in the NWSL. Seattle (2-8-1) scored its goals in the waning minutes of stoppage time in each half.

"It seems like the game was maybe not as good [from the score line], but for me, I don't have that

opinion, to be honest," interim coach Adrián González said. "We competed very good today."

Bethune scored the Spirit's opening goal and contributed an assist, continuing a stellar start that earned her an invitation to next week's U.S. national team camp as a training player.

In the 1-0 loss in the opener against Seattle, Bethune had just one shot and zero shot-creating actions while still gaining a feel for the professional game. In the 10 matches since, Bethune has tallied four goals and a league-high eight assists. Her pass in the 45th minute to set up the Spirit's third goal extended her NWSL rookie assists record, which she set last week.

"Sometimes goals aren't always beautiful and pretty, they're nitty and gritty. When we realized the cues to press, we were going to press," Bethune said. "When we

SEE SPIRIT ON D5

Spirit at Utah Royals
June 8, 7:30 p.m., Ion



AMBER SEARLS/USA TODAY SPORTS

Hal Hershfelt puts her arm around midfielder Andi Sullivan after Sullivan's penalty kick in the first half gave Washington a 2-0 lead.

D.C. is in the mix to host NFL draft as soon as '27

BY NICKI JHABVALA
AND MARK MASKE

D.C. representatives and Washington Commanders officials are vying for the District to host a future NFL draft and are optimistic that the nation's capital will be chosen to stage the event as soon as 2027, according to four people familiar with the deliberations.

But while several of those connected to the D.C. effort are confident that Washington will be selected as the site of an NFL draft in the coming years, others within the league cautioned that the competition is intense, as many cities with NFL franchises aspire to be picked to host the popular and increasingly lucrative event.

The Commanders were among 12 teams with representatives in Detroit at this year's draft to conduct site surveys, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

The 2027 draft is the next one available. Green Bay, Wis., is scheduled to host the 2025 draft,

and the league announced Wednesday that Pittsburgh was chosen to host the event in 2026.

It's not clear when the league will award the 2027 draft. Team owners meet on a quarterly basis, but the selection process could last until next May, if the NFL follows the timetable by which it just awarded the 2026 draft.

The details of Washington's effort are not known, including whether the city would stage the event on the National Mall, which is administered by the National Park Service.

A delegation from the NFL visited D.C. last fall to assess the area's potential for hosting a future draft, multiple people with knowledge of the visit said.

The Commanders and the NFL, as well as Events DC, the official convention and sports authority for the District, declined to comment on Washington's effort to host a draft. The National Park Service and the office of D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) did not

SEE DRAFT ON D3

CONFERENCE FINALS
Presented by Google Pixel

CELTICS VS PACERS
TONIGHT 8:30PM ET abc

THE DAY IN SPORTS

GOLF

After 70-minute wait, Riley caps pristine day

Davis Riley had to wait out a 70-minute weather delay before his last shot in the second round at Colonial in Fort Worth.

Riley made a three-foot par putt right after play resumed Friday, wrapping up a bogey-free 6-under-par 64 to get to 10 under at the Charles Schwab Challenge. He was two strokes ahead of **Hayden Buckley** and **Pierceson Coody** after they both shot 65s.

After a chip to three feet on the 408-yard ninth hole, Riley had to mark his ball and retreat to the nearby clubhouse when the horns went off because of storm cells with lightning that were in the surrounding areas. There were only some brief light raindrops during the delay.

Buckley was on the green at No. 6, his 15th hole, when the weather delay began. He resumed play with a six-foot birdie and then parred out. . . .

Spanish golfer **Nacho Elvira** shot a 7-under 64 for the second straight day to take the lead of the Soudal Open after the second round of the DP World Tour event in Antwerp, Belgium.

Elvira had seven birdies in a bogey-free round at Rinkven International Golf Club. He's one stroke ahead of **Ross Fisher**, who carded a 63. . . .

Richard Bland is hitting it so well he felt he struggled on the greens of Harbor Shores and still managed a 5-under 66 to set the target at the Senior PGA Championship in the Englishman's senior major debut in Benton Harbor, Mich.

Bland, who won his first DP World tour title at 48 and joined Saudi-funded LIV Golf a year later, was at 12-under 130.

SOCCER

Xavi will not return to Barcelona after all

First he wanted out. Then he wanted to stay. Finally, Barcelona decided enough is enough and parted ways with coach **Xavi Hernandez**.

One month after Xavi said he would continue as coach despite a disappointing season, the club told the former midfield great it did not want him back.

In the latest and most likely final twist to a bumpy season, Barcelona announced it was making a coaching change for next season.

Xavi led Barcelona to the Spanish league championship last season, but his team has struggled this campaign, which will finish without a title and with Barcelona a distant second to champion Real Madrid.

Xavi said in January that he wanted to leave the club this summer and not complete the last year of his contract. In April, the 44-year-old changed his mind after his players showed him they believed in the team's potential and improved their performances. . . .

For the second time, Equatorial Guinea must forfeit two World Cup qualifying games for fielding star player **Emilio Nsue** when he was ineligible, FIFA said.

The second FIFA disciplinary case involving Nsue's eligibility comes 11 years after the first and adds to the string of such cases involving Equatorial Guinea national teams.

The latest ruling against Nsue was announced just four months after he was the top scorer at the Africa Cup of Nations, where he was permitted to play by the Confederation of African Football.

FIFA said its disciplinary committee ruled that Equatorial Guinea's first two World Cup qualifying games last November must be forfeited as 3-0 losses. Equatorial Guinea won both games, against Namibia and Liberia, 1-0, with Nsue scoring the goal.

That dropped Equatorial Guinea into last place in its six-team qualifying group for the 2026 tournament. . . . Real Madrid holding midfielder **Aurélien Tchouaméni** will miss the Champions League final because of a foot injury, Coach **Carlo Ancelotti** said.

The 24-year-old France international won't be available for the European title game against Borussia Dortmund on June 1 in London.

AUTO RACING

Dixon and Castroneves are Carb Day's fastest

Scott Dixon and **Helio Castroneves** turned the fastest laps on Carb Day during final practice for the Indianapolis 500,



MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES

Working lunch

Lewis Hamilton drives his Mercedes past diners while practicing Friday ahead of Sunday's Formula One Monaco Grand Prix.

SPOTLIGHT: TENNIS

After upset, Djokovic enters French rattled

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — Novak Djokovic will defend his French Open title in Paris still without a trophy this season after losing in the Geneva Open semifinals Friday.

The 44th-ranked Tomas Machac beat Djokovic, 6-4, 0-6, 6-1, in the last clay-court event to prepare for Roland Garros, where main draw play starts Sunday.

"Of course I am worried. I haven't been playing good at all this year," Djokovic said.

His record in 2024 dropped to 14-6 overall and 0-3 in semifinals, including at the Australian Open against Jannik Sinner.

"I don't consider myself a favorite there," the top-ranked Serb said of his

Loss to 44th-ranked Machac at Geneva Open leaves Serb 0-3 in 2024 semifinals

chances at Roland Garros, where he has won two of the past three titles and three overall among his men's-record 24 Grand Slam singles titles. "I'm going to take it match by match and see how far I can go."

Machac took his first match-point chance, which came on Djokovic's serve, and clinched when Djokovic pushed a backhand long. It was the fifth time Djokovic had his service broken, and he made 27 unforced errors.

"If you play against Novak, you just hope and try to play your best and see how it looks," Machac said in an on-court interview.

Djokovic took a medical timeout after the first set because of a stomach problem.

"It was a terrible feeling with stomach and health today. It was not a great night and today as well," he said. "I don't want to take anything away from his win; he deserved it."

Machac will play his first tour final Saturday against two-time Geneva champion Casper Ruud, the French Open runner-up for the past two years, or the unseeded Flavio Cobolli. Their semifinal was pushed back to Saturday because of rain.

TELEVISION AND RADIO

MLB	
1:30 p.m.	San Francisco at New York Mets » MLB Network
2 p.m.	Baltimore at Chicago White Sox » MASN, WYTY (97.9 FM), WSNB (630 AM)
4 p.m.	Seattle at Washington » MASN2, WJFK (106.7 FM), WDCN (87.7 FM)
4:30 p.m.	Milwaukee at Boston » MLB Network (joined in progress)
7 p.m.	Los Angeles Dodgers at Cincinnati » WTTG (Ch. 5), WBFF (Ch. 45)
10 p.m.	Miami at Arizona » Fox Sports 1

NBA PLAYOFFS — EASTERN CONFERENCE FINALS	
8:30 p.m.	Game 3: Boston at Indiana » WJLA (Ch. 7), WMAR (Ch. 2), WSNB (630 AM)

STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS — WESTERN CONFERENCE FINALS	
8 p.m.	Game 2: Edmonton at Dallas » TNT

WNBA	
1 p.m.	New York at Minnesota » WUSA (Ch. 9), WJZ (Ch. 13)
8 p.m.	Connecticut at Chicago » CBS Sports Network
9 p.m.	Washington at Seattle » Monumental Sports Network
9 p.m.	Indiana at Las Vegas » NBA TV

AUTO RACING	
6:30 a.m.	Formula One: Monaco Grand Prix, practice » ESPN2
10 a.m.	Formula One: Monaco Grand Prix, qualifying » ESPN2
1 p.m.	NASCAR Xfinity Series: BetMGM 300 » WTTG (Ch. 5), WBFF (Ch. 45)
5 p.m.	NASCAR Cup Series: Coca-Cola 600, qualifying » Fox Sports 1

GOLF	
7:30 a.m.	DP World Tour: Soudal Open, third round » Golf Channel
1 p.m.	PGA Tour: Charles Schwab Challenge, third round » Golf Channel
1 p.m.	PGA Tour Champions: Senior PGA Championship, third round » WRC (Ch. 4), WBAL (Ch. 11)
3 p.m.	PGA Tour: Charles Schwab Challenge, third round » WUSA (Ch. 9), WJZ (Ch. 13)

SOCCER	
1 p.m.	CAF Champions League: ES Tunis at Al Ahly » beIN Sports
1:30 p.m.	German Cup: FC Kaiserslautern at Bayer 04 Leverkusen » ESPN2
7:30 p.m.	MLS: Toronto at D.C. United » Apple TV Plus, WONK (104.7 FM), WTSD (1190 AM)
10 p.m.	NWSL: Kansas City at Portland » Ion

TENNIS	
7 a.m.	ATP: Geneva Open and Lyon Open, finals; WTA: Morocco Open, finals » Tennis Channel

while pole sitter **Scott McLaughlin** and Team Penske teammates **Josef Newgarden** and **Will Power** had stress-free days.

Dixon and Castroneves, who have five Indy 500 wins between them, will start way back in the seventh row Sunday after their Honda-powered cars struggled to keep up with the Chevrolet might of Penske and the Arrow McLaren lunch in qualifying.

Yet in race setup, Chip Ganassi Racing and Meyer Shank Racing — along with **Colton Herta** and the rest of Andretti Global — have proved they can compete. Herta was fourth on the speed chart as Honda cars nailed down five of the six fastest laps Friday, and **Pato O'Ward** in third was the lone Chevrolet to break up the manufacturer stranglehold.

"It seems more level," said Dixon, who had a fast lap of

227.206 mph, before adding: "Many times the fastest car doesn't win." . . .

Chase Elliott criticized NASCAR for fining driver **Ricky Stenhouse Jr.** \$75,000 for punching **Kyle Busch** following Sunday night's All-Star Race after it had used video of the fight on social media.

It was the largest fine ever handed down for fighting in NASCAR history.

"That seems like a lot for that situation," Elliott said ahead of this weekend's Coca-Cola 600 Cup Series race at Charlotte Motor Speedway. "You are going to fine him, but you are going to promote with it? Like, what are we doing? That's a little strange to me. . . . That's a lot of money to fine a guy. It's like, 'It's not okay, but we are going to blast it all over everything to get more clicks.'"

Elliott was referring to NASCAR posting video of the fight at North Wilkesboro Speedway on the social platform X along with the words: "We'll call this a . . . difference of opinion."

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Virginia loses to FSU in ACC quarterfinal

James Tibbs III hit his team-leading 25th homer of the season and the 52nd of his career, and No. 5 seed Florida State advanced to the ACC tournament semifinals with a 12-7 victory over fourth-seeded Virginia in Charlotte.

Tibbs, the ACC player of the year, went 2 for 3 with five RBI. He gave Florida State (41-14) the lead in the fourth inning on a two-run single and then walked with the bases loaded in the fifth to make it 4-1. He added a sacrifice fly to begin a seven-run seventh inning.

Daniel Cantu highlighted the top of the seventh with a long shot to the wall that center fielder **Bobby Whalen** appeared to catch but didn't. Cantu raced for a triple, and two scored for a 9-2 lead.

Virginia (41-15) responded by hitting three home runs in an inning for the third time this season to make it 11-7. But the Cavaliers intentionally walked **Cam Smith** to load the bases with one out in the eighth to face Tibbs, who delivered with a deep drive into the seats.

Virginia starter **Joe Savino** allowed four runs in 4²/₃ innings.

PRO FOOTBALL

Saints make payment to update Superdome

The New Orleans Saints made an \$11.4 million payment toward Superdome renovations, diffusing a public standoff between the team and state officials who oversee the stadium that will host the next Super Bowl.

Announcement of the payment by the club and the Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District came hours after Saints President **Dennis Lauscha**, in comments published on the team's website, decried "disingenuous and unprofessional" conduct by the state commission that oversees the Superdome.

Lauscha also confirmed the team's decision to hold back payments since December stemmed from dissatisfaction over the state's posture in parallel negotiations toward a long-term Superdome lease.

The district "was informed that material progress toward a long-term lease had to be made or payments would be stopped," Lauscha said on the team website.

But late Friday afternoon, officials said payment was made after Lauscha and district board chairman **Rob Vossbein** had a "productive call."

MISC.

Ex-Terp Miller is out with a knee injury

Minnesota Lynx forward **Diamond Miller** will be sidelined indefinitely with a right knee injury.

The Lynx announced that Miller, the second overall pick out of Maryland in the 2023 draft, will soon meet with a knee specialist about treatment options.

The WNBA team did not specify the exact nature of the injury Miller suffered in the second quarter of the game Thursday against Connecticut. Miller is averaging 4.3 points over the first three games of the season. She averaged 12.1 points per game as a rookie last year. . . .

In St. Paul, Minn., **Michela Cava** and **Taylor Heise** each had a goal and an assist to lead Minnesota to a 4-1 victory over Boston, giving their team a 2-1 lead in the inaugural championship series of the Professional Women's Hockey League.

Minnesota will host Game 4 in the best-of-five series Sunday. . . .

Andrea Vendrame's solo downhill attack won him the 19th stage of the Giro d'Italia, while overall leader **Tadej Pogacar** avoided any risks on the rain-slicked roads.

The second win of Vendrame's career at the Giro followed a stage victory in 2021 for the Italian rider.

Vendrame clocked just under four hours on the undulating stage, which included three categorized climbs in the final 37 miles of the 98-mile route from Mortegliano to Sappada.

— From news services

NBA PLAYOFFS

Doncic hits the winner to give Dallas a 2-0 lead

MAVERICKS 109, TIMBERWOLVES 108

BY DAVE CAMPBELL

MINNEAPOLIS — Luka Doncic hit the go-ahead three-pointer with Rudy Gobert guarding him at the top of the key with three seconds left, posting his fifth triple-double of the playoffs to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 109-108 victory and a 2-0 lead over the Minnesota Timberwolves in the Western Conference finals Friday night.

Doncic had 32 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds for his eighth triple-double in 42 career post-season games for the Mavericks, who erased an 18-point deficit that stood late in the second quarter and were still down 16 midway through the third.

Naz Reid went 7 for 9 from three-point range for 23 points, but his last try at the buzzer rimmed in and out to send Minnesota to Dallas for Game 3 on Sunday in a big hole after another off night by stars Anthony Edwards and Karl-Anthony Towns.

Kyrie Irving had 13 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter, including a corner three with 1:05 left that pulled the Mavericks within two. Then the Timberwolves sandwiched turnovers around a short miss by Doncic. Edwards recklessly threw the ball out of bounds off a drive with 13 seconds left, giving the Mavericks the ball with the chance to win.

Doncic took the inbound pass

and dribbled to set up a screen by Dereck Lively II that triggered a switch by Minnesota, with NBA all-defensive second-team pick Jaden McDaniels dropping with Lively's roll and defensive player of the year Gobert staying out on the top of the key.

After the swish, Doncic flexed his arms and yelled at the stunned crowd as his teammates swarmed him.

The lead for either side was three points or fewer from 10:50 remaining to 1:29 until Edwards — who had 21 points but is shooting 11 for 33 in the series — sank two free throws for a 108-103 edge. That came right after Irving missed both foul shots that had the crowd howling in honor of the promotion that awards a free Chick-fil-A sandwich.

Mike Conley scored 18 points and Gobert added 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who needed Reid — the NBA sixth man of the year — more than ever. His top-of-the-key swish at the end of the third quarter gave Minnesota an 86-79 cushion just after the Mavericks closed the gap hard with a 21-7 spurt — mostly while Conley rested — over a 6:36 stretch.

Irving, who scored only five points in the first half after he had 24 of his 30 in Game 1 before halftime, gave the Mavericks their first lead since 7-6 with a three-pointer to cap an 8-0 run that started the fourth quarter and made it 87-86.

Doncic, who flourished in the fourth quarter of Game 1 to finish



STEPHEN MATUREN/GETTY IMAGES

Luka Doncic recorded his fifth triple-double of the playoffs with 32 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds.

with 33 points, has been fighting through what the Mavericks have listed on the league's official injury report as a sprained right knee and left ankle soreness.

When he was subbed out late in the first quarter, Doncic jogged straight to the locker room before

returning to the bench prior to his next shift. After running the floor for a fast-break layup late in the second quarter, Doncic was laboring and limping on the way back. He shot 5 for 14 before halftime.

The beauty of the 25-year-old

Slovenian superstar's game is that he hardly needs a full-strength spring in his step to dominate. He had Minnesota's league-leading defense looking out of sorts on so many possessions with his laserlike passing.

— Associated Press

CANDACE BUCKNER

Missing swagger and star, Pacers are in an 0-2 hole

BUCKNER FROM D1

showcase against the Boston Celtics, these Pacers are missing what makes them so dangerous. Their joy.

On Thursday night, Indiana exuded so little of that key ingredient during a 126-110 loss. Witness T.J. McConnell growling and Myles Turner searching, pleading and still not finding anyone to take his side. But much worse than the flashes of frustration was the sight of Haliburton retreating to the Pacers' sideline in the third quarter and not returning to the floor.

Only later did the reason for his absence become known: a sore left hamstring. The same left hamstring that caused him to miss 10 games during the regular season. The same left hamstring that nearly stole the Pacers' joy when the team went 6-4 in the games he missed, then lost five of eight upon his hobbled return.

Following Thursday's defeat, Indiana Coach Rick Carlisle tolerated a litany of questions on the injury — how Haliburton might have hurt his leg, whether he had aggravated the same injury from late January, his status for Game 3 on Saturday night in Indianapolis. Finally, Carlisle grew tired in his role as a pseudo-orthopedic specialist.

"I think we need to move on to another topic here," Carlisle said, redirecting reporters in the postgame news conference.

Unfortunately for the Pacers, if Haliburton remains hurt or limited, there will be no other topics to discuss. Nothing else will matter. Maybe they'll get to play a few more games before Boston, the East's top team, takes its predictive place in the NBA Finals. But certainly if the conductor of the Pacers' symphony of randomness can no longer be himself, there will be no more joy.

"Losing Ty for the game, obviously, was a big blow," Carlisle said, a quote that could define the rest of the series for Indiana.

Still, besides Haliburton's exit, other maladies factored into the Pacers falling into this 2-0 hole. The team in gold looked a step or two slow on defense and got cooked 54-34 in the paint. The Pacers were sloppy at the start, committing 10 turnovers in the first half. Mostly, they looked discontented.

The spiral began in the second quarter. The Pacers led 27-25, but immediately after forward Pascal Siakam couldn't finish at the rim, Boston's Al Horford got a breakaway dunk. The next time down, the Celtics secured three straight offensive rebounds to extend a possession before



DAVID BUTLER II/USA TODAY SPORTS

Pacers point guard Tyrese Haliburton left Thursday night's Eastern Conference finals game vs. the Celtics with left hamstring soreness.

Jaylen Brown closed it with a layup, one of his forceful buckets in a 40-point night.

When Carlisle burned a quick timeout, McConnell, the backup point guard, spread his arms and slapped down at his sides, then huddled up his teammates near the sideline, red-faced and screaming. In his defense, watching Old Man Horford beat the entire Indiana team down court could make anyone lose his temper.

Later, when Turner picked up his third foul — light contact but contact for sure — he argued with officials. Then, as NBA players love to do, Turner turned to the Pacers' sideline and demonstratively motioned for Carlisle to call for a review by twirling a finger in the air. Carlisle didn't look toward his

assistants behind the bench, the ones tasked with monitoring potential blown calls; he just looked for a replacement to play the five spot. Turner could only walk to his seat, still angrily twirling his finger.

Then, near the end of the half, after Aaron Nesmith coughed up turnover No. 10 by overdribbling around Boston's hawk on defense, Derrick White, Haliburton headed back to the sideline with his head bowed. Though the score wasn't out of hand and the high-scoring Pacers needed just one good run to get back into the game, their beaten-down body language told another story.

"We bounced back decently, got it to six at halftime, but the third [quarter] was tough," Carlisle said.

During that quarter, the Pacers lost any realistic shot at coming back. And that was before they lost Haliburton.

The play before his departure seemed normal enough, with Haliburton trying to defend Brown on a drive. Though Brown passed on the layup, as Haliburton gave up on defense and backed entirely out of the play, the lane opened for reserve forward Oshae Brissett's dunk that gave the Celtics an 11-point advantage. Haliburton then backed all the way to the sideline, to the locker room, to the trainer's table and straight into the next morning's talking points.

The Pacers are better when they play with their secret sauce of swagger. Some might see it as front-running; when the game's flowing, Haliburton tilts his head to the heavens and screams or searches out stares on enemy turf and talks junk. But that's just human nature. Joy comes easier when things are going well. For the Pacers, joy happens when Turner's attacking the rim for his springboard dunks, McConnell's harassing opponents for 94 feet and Siakam's displaying his interior moves, then his counter moves, looking like he's losing balance on a sheet of ice but converting anyhow. Joy comes when everyone's scoring in bunches, because the ball never stays still when Haliburton's in control.

Now, a sore left hamstring threatens Indiana's postseason. An Eastern Conference finals stage that was supposed to introduce these Pacers at their best might be taking a turn for the worse.

Terps had to overcome breakdowns on road to 29th Final Four

BY GENE WANG

Late last week, the Maryland men's lacrosse team was traveling to Long Island for the NCAA tournament quarterfinals when one of the charter buses carrying players stalled after barely making it across the George Washington Bridge into New York.

It was around 2 in the afternoon, and traffic was mounting. Practice had been scheduled for midday, when the seventh-seeded Terrapins were due to arrive at a high school not far from Hofstra University, one of the host sites for last weekend's games, but wound up being postponed until early evening.

In recounting the incident, Coach John Tillman indicated he and his staff initially thought about trying to arrange for another bus but the wait with the heart of rush hour approaching quickly put that idea to rest. Players instead turned to phone apps to hail rides. The first arriving car slowed by the side of the road but pulled away without picking up passengers, Maryland faceoff specialist Luke Wierman recalled.

Eventually players found

enough drivers willing to stop, and the entire team made it to its destination, albeit many hours behind schedule. The lengthy delay did little to faze the Terrapins (10-5), who upset No. 2 seed Duke, 14-11, to earn a berth in Saturday's national semifinals against sixth-seeded Virginia (12-5) in Philadelphia.

"The guys handled it great, like they didn't bat an eye, and, again, I think that's part of the ups and downs of the season," Tillman said. "Sometimes it's been good. Sometimes it's not been good, but the guys just didn't flinch. It was: 'All right, this is what we've got to do. We have to change practice. We have to change dinner.' And the guys just didn't miss a beat, and I think at this point when things aren't going well, the guys can just roll with it."

Take the victory over the Blue Devils at James M. Shuart Stadium, in which Maryland trailed the deficit to grow out of reach. But the Terrapins reeled off four consecutive goals bridging the third and fourth quarters to draw within 10-9 with 10:16 left in the

game.

Then they claimed the lead for good on fifth-year attackman Daniel Maltz's goal that made it 12-11 with 5:01 remaining. The Ashburn native buried another less than two minutes later following a replay review in which officials halted play as Duke had possession and was getting settled in the offensive zone.

Senior midfielder Jack Koras's goal into an empty net with 33 seconds to go ignited a celebration along the sideline that spilled onto the field at the final buzzer, securing Maryland's 29th trip to the Final Four, including 10 in 14 seasons under Tillman, whose record in NCAA tournament quarterfinals improved to 10-1.

"That's just a tribute to the incredible coaching and team that John Tillman has put together, year in and year out," Cavaliers Coach Lars Tiffany said. "Ten and one in the quarterfinals? I mean, that's unbelievable, and so a tremendous amount of respect for his program and his men."

At the beginning of the month, Maryland's ability to make another run in the postseason was in serious doubt after two straight

losses in which the Terrapins failed to reach double-digit goals. The first of those came in a 7-5 setback to Johns Hopkins in the regular season finale at Home-wood Field in Baltimore.

Less than two weeks later, Maryland fell to Penn State, 19-9, in the Big Ten tournament semifinals in Columbus, Ohio, by far its most lopsided loss of the season. Compounding Maryland's fading fortunes at the time was Braden Erksa being carted off the field at Ohio State Lacrosse Stadium on a stretcher after a violent collision that dislodged the sophomore attackman's helmet.

Erksa remained overnight at the hospital for further evaluation but was able to fly home with the team the next morning. Maryland's medical staff cleared Erksa (24 goals, 15 assists) to play the day before the Terrapins' NCAA tournament opener May 11 against Princeton at SECU Stadium.

The Terrapins' leader in points played sparingly, but Maryland rolled nonetheless, 16-8, and is thriving again in pursuit of the fifth NCAA tournament championship in program history. The

last of those four titles came in 2022, when Maryland completed the season 18-0, which included an 18-9 dismantling of the Cavaliers in the quarterfinals.

This year the Terrapins lost to visiting Virginia, 14-10, on March 16 in part because of 17 turnovers and a 37-25 deficit in groundballs. The Terrapins did, however, hold a slight 16-12 advantage at the faceoff X behind Wierman. The graduate midfielder went 20 for 29 on faceoffs against Duke, including winning 7 of 10 in the fourth quarter when the Terrapins stormed back with seven goals.

"Anytime you get to play a team twice, especially when you've lost to them — doesn't really happen often in life when you get a second-chance opportunity," said Terrapins senior defenseman Ajax Zappitello, the Big Ten defensive player of the year. "So that's going to be obviously the message throughout the week. But at the same time we've just got to focus on us, I think, coming out, starting the game strong."

Virginia vs. Maryland
2:30 p.m., ESPN2

NHL ROUNDUP

Goodrow's goal in OT helps N.Y. get even

RANGERS 2, PANTHERS 1 (OT)

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barclay Goodrow scored at 14:01 of overtime and the New York Rangers beat the Florida Panthers, 2-1, on Friday night in Game 2 to even the Eastern Conference finals.

Goodrow fired a snap shot from above that circles over goalie Sergei Bobrovsky's right shoulder, sending the Madison Square Garden crowd that had been sitting on edge into a frenzy.

Vincent Trocheck scored early and Igor Shesterkin made 26 saves for the Rangers. Riding the excitement of having tough guy Matt Rempe back in the lineup, they showed a lot more life after being shut out, 3-0, in the opener.

Carter Verhaeghe scored for Florida, and Bobrovsky made 29 saves. The Panthers lost for only the second time in seven games away from home in the playoffs.

The series shifts to Florida for Games 3 and 4 on Sunday and Tuesday.

Jets promote Arniel to coach

The Winnipeg Jets promoted associate coach Scott Arniel to head coach, replacing the retired Rick Bowness.

The move comes almost three weeks after Bowness retired. A former Jets left wing, Arniel joined Bowness's staff in 2022.

The 61-year-old Arniel helped Bowness lead the Jets to a 98-57-9 record and two playoff appearances over two seasons.

• **HURRICANES:** Don Waddell stepped down as Carolina's president and general manager, ending a run in which he built a roster that reached the Stanley Cup playoffs for six consecutive seasons.

Assistant GM Eric Tulsky will work as interim GM until a permanent successor is found.

New owner could help D.C. land NFL draft

DRAFT FROM D1

respond to requests for comment.

The NFL long held the draft in New York before staging it in Chicago in 2015 and 2016. Since then, the site has moved annually. Drafts were held in Philadelphia in 2017; Arlington, Tex., in 2018; Nashville in 2019; Cleveland in 2021; Las Vegas in 2022; Kansas City, Mo., last year; and Detroit last month. The 2020 NFL draft was conducted remotely because of the pandemic.

Last month's draft in downtown Detroit drew a record 775,000 fans over the three-day event, according to the NFL.

The broadcasts of the opening round of this year's draft averaged 12.1 million viewers — more than any World Series or Stanley Cup finals game last year and more than all but one NBA Finals game and all but one college football regular season game last year.

That reflects the overwhelming popularity of the NFL, given that the draft's core activity consists merely of Commissioner Roger Goodell or someone else announcing the names of the players selected by the teams.

At the conclusion of this year's draft, Detroit officials said the event may have generated more than the original projection of \$175 million to \$200 million in economic impact. Kansas City officials said the 2023 draft was responsible for \$164.3 million in economic impact.

Some of those connected to Washington's effort have speculated that the District probably would have already landed an NFL draft if not for the controversy that surrounded former Commanders owner Daniel Snyder. The District, in conjunction with team officials, attempted to host the 2024 draft and had plans to hold the three-day event over multiple sites in D.C. But that draft was awarded in 2022 to Detroit.

Snyder sold the Commanders last year to an ownership group led by private equity investor Josh Harris for \$6.05 billion.

BASEBALL

National League

Table with columns: EAST, W, L, PCT, GB, L10, STR. Rows include Philadelphia, Atlanta, Washington, New York, Miami.

Table with columns: CENTRAL, W, L, PCT, GB, L10, STR. Rows include Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati.

Table with columns: WEST, W, L, PCT, GB, L10, STR. Rows include Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Arizona, Colorado.

American League

Table with columns: EAST, W, L, PCT, GB, L10, STR. Rows include New York, Baltimore, Boston, Tampa Bay, Toronto.

Table with columns: CENTRAL, W, L, PCT, GB, L10, STR. Rows include Cleveland, Kansas City, Minnesota, Detroit, Chicago.

Table with columns: WEST, W, L, PCT, GB, L10, STR. Rows include Seattle, Texas, Houston, Oakland, Los Angeles.

Nationals 6, Mariners 1

Box score for Nationals vs Mariners, May 24, 2024.

SEATTLE 100 000 000 - 1 5 0 WASHINGTON 000 302 01X - 6 8 0

LOB: Seattle 5, Washington 2. HR: Crawford (3), off Gore; Garcia (5), off Kirby; Ruiz (3), off Kirby; Rosario (7), off Voth. RBI: Crawford (10), Garcia (2), Ruiz (2), Rosario (18), SB: Moore (2) (8), CS: Abrams (4).

NL leaders

Table listing NL leaders in batting, home runs, ERA, saves, strikeouts, and RBI.

Pirates 11, Braves 5

Nick Gonzales drove in a career-high four runs and left-hander Bailey Falter carried a shutout into the eighth inning to earn his first win since late April as Pittsburgh topped Atlanta.

Box score for Pirates vs Braves, May 24, 2024.

ATLANTA 000 000 050 - 5 7 2 PITTSBURGH 203 023 10X - 11 14 0

Tigers 6, Blue Jays 2

Colt Keith hit his first major league home run and Kenta Maeda threw five scoreless innings in his return as Detroit snapped a five-game losing streak.

Box score for Tigers vs Blue Jays, May 24, 2024.

Twins 3, Rangers 2

Alex Kirilloff hit a go-ahead home run in the fourth inning and Minnesota retired 15 of the last 16 hitters as the Twins edged slumping Texas.

Box score for Twins vs Rangers, May 24, 2024.

Brewers 7, Red Sox 2

William Contreras hit a two-run home run, Christian Yelich had three hits and Bryce Wilson tossed 5 1/2 innings of two-run ball as Milwaukee beat Boston.

Box score for Brewers vs Red Sox, May 24, 2024.

Giants 8, Mets 7

Patrick Bailey hit a go-ahead grand slam in the eighth inning, Gold Glove third baseman Matt Chapman saved the game with a defensive gem, and San Francisco came back from another big deficit to beat staggering New York.

Box score for Giants vs Mets, May 24, 2024.

Reds 9, Dodgers 6

Jonathan India hit a grand slam in a six-run fifth inning, Spencer Steer had a three-run homer and center fielder Stuart Fairchild robbed the Dodgers' Will Smith of a home run with a leaping catch as Cincinnati turned back Los Angeles.

Box score for Reds vs Dodgers, May 24, 2024.



JOE SARGENT/GETTY IMAGES

Man of steel

Bailey Falter, sporting Pittsburgh's City Connect threads, delivers a first-inning pitch against the Braves. The Pirates' offense came ready to play, providing Falter an early five-run cushion in an eventual 11-5 win.

Royals 8, Rays 1

Seth Lugo became the American League's first eight-game winner, Michael Massey and Bobby Witt Jr. homered, and Kansas City beat Tampa Bay for its seventh consecutive victory.

Box score for Royals vs Rays, May 24, 2024.

KANSAS CITY 000 231 200 - 8 12 0 TAMPA BAY 100 000 000 - 1 4 0

Notes

ASTROS: 1B Jose Abreu, whose slump forced the team to option him to its spring training site, was assigned to Class AAA. BREWERS: Placed RHP AJ Smith-Shawver on the 15-day injured list with a strained left oblique. METS: RHP Kodai Senga scrapped Friday's bullpen session and received a cortisone shot in his ailing right shoulder. ROYALS: RHP Dean Kremer became the second Baltimore starter to be sidelined in successive days when he was placed on the IL with a strained right triceps.

NOTES

BUSCH STADIUM CLASH IS POSTPONED BY RAIN

Friday night's contest between the Cardinals and Cubs in St. Louis was shelved by rain and rescheduled as part of a doubleheader July 13.

PERSONNEL DEPT.

ASTROS: 1B Jose Abreu, whose slump forced the team to option him to its spring training site, was assigned to Class AAA.

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BREWERS: Promoted RHP Enoli Paredes from Class AAA Nashville.

GIANTS: Struggling LHP Blake Snell (0-3, 11.40 ERA) was placed on the paternity list.

METS: RHP Kodai Senga scrapped Friday's bullpen session and received a cortisone shot in his ailing right shoulder.

ROYALS: RHP Dean Kremer became the second Baltimore starter to be sidelined in successive days when he was placed on the IL with a strained right triceps.

TODAY

Interleague games

Table listing interleague games between Mariners/Nationals, Brewers/Red Sox, Yankees/Padres, and Yankees/Blue Jays.

Interleague scores

Table listing scores for Thursday's results at Philadelphia 5, Texas 2 at Oakland 10, Colorado 9 (11) and Friday's results at Washington 6, Seattle 1; Milwaukee 7, at Boston 2; N.Y. Yankees at San Diego, late.

AL games

Table listing scores for Orioles at White Sox, Blue Jays at Tigers, Rangers at Twins, Astros at Athletics, Royals at Rays, and Guardians at Angels.

AL scores

Table listing scores for Thursday's results at Chicago White Sox 6 at N.Y. Yankees 5, Seattle 0; Toronto 9, at Detroit 1; Baltimore 8, at Kansas City 5; Kansas City 8, at Tampa Bay 1; Kansas City 3, Texas 2; Cleveland at L.A. Angels, late; Houston at Oakland, late.

NL games

Table listing scores for Giants at Mets, Braves at Pirates, Cubs at Cardinals, Dodgers at Reds, Phillies at Rockies, Marlins at Diamondbacks, and Cardinals at Cardinals.

NL scores

Table listing scores for Thursday's results at Pittsburgh 6 at San Diego 6, at Cincinnati 4 (10); Atlanta 3, at Chicago Cubs 0; Pittsburgh 11, Atlanta 5; San Francisco 8, at N.Y. Mets 7; Cincinnati 9, L.A. Dodgers 6; Philadelphia at Colorado, late; Miami at Arizona, late; Chicago Cubs at St. Louis, p.p.d.

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AL leaders

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JOHN MCDONNELL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

"It's always a great feeling to be able to put the team ahead early," said Luis Garcia Jr., who hit a three-run homer in the fourth inning.

Nationals follow Martinez's advice and top Mariners

NATIONALS FROM D1

Two batters later, Joey Meneses singled on a sinker in the middle of the zone. And finally, Luis Garcia Jr. stepped up to the plate and smacked a three-run homer to the opposite field, looking back to the dugout as he rounded first. He swung at the first pitch, a slider down the middle — the type of breaking ball Martinez said a couple hours earlier that Garcia had been crushing this season.

"It's always a great feeling to be able to put the team ahead early," Garcia said through an interpreter. "I'm a fastball hitter, and I'm always trying to be ready on the fastball, but my approach of trying

to stay up the middle and away has let me be able to see my breaking pitches better, stay back on them better."

Washington (22-27) was plenty loose after that. Keibert Ruiz, who has struggled and chased this season, worked a six-pitch at-bat in the sixth inning, didn't swing at a pitch outside the zone and put a high sinker into the seats for a two-run homer and a 5-1 lead. It was his third long ball of the year and first since April 27.

"I was trying to eliminate movement with my mechanics and trying to be more calm, see more pitches," Ruiz said. "I know I can put the ball in play. It's just how I hit it. I need hard contact. . . .

Unbelievable feeling. I haven't done that in a long time, so it was a good day."

Gore, too, had to find himself after Crawford smacked his second pitch of the game, a 97-mph fastball in the middle of the zone, for a solo home run to left-center. But the left-hander settled in, painting the edges and dominating Seattle (27-25) with his curveball. The Mariners whiffed on more than half of their swings against his curveball. When he exited after the seventh, he gave Ruiz a forceful high-five as he headed to the dugout.

"He sees what Mitchell Parker does, what Jake [Irvin] does, and he understands he's got to throw

strikes," Martinez said. "When he throws strikes, his stuff is electric. When you get the ball over the plate and his misses are close, they're going to swing and miss, swing and have weak contact. Tonight was the night that he did that."

Eddie Rosario led off the eighth with a solo shot to account for the final margin.

"Homers are fun," Gore said. "We all love them. I'm sure you all love them, too."

Notes: Outfielder Lane Thomas has begun playing full games in a rehab assignment with Class AA Harrisburg and is feeling better, albeit with a bit of soreness, Martinez said. Thomas has been out

NATIONALS ON DECK

vs. Seattle Mariners

Saturday 4:05 MASN2

Sunday 1:35 MASN2

at Atlanta Braves

Monday 4:10 MASN2

Tuesday 7:20 MASN2

Wednesday 7:20 MASN2

Thursday 7:20 MASN

at Cleveland Guardians

Friday 7:10 MASN

June 1 4:10 MASN

June 2 1:40 MASN

Radio: WJFK (106.7 FM), WDCN (87.7 FM)

since late April with a sprained medial collateral ligament in his left knee. Martinez said the team will reevaluate him over the weekend. . . .

Right-hander Josiah Gray will throw 30 to 35 pitches Saturday in his first live batting practice since straining the right flexor muscle near his forearm in early April. The Nationals are most focused on his command, particularly with his fastball; in his most recent bullpen session, 24 of his 30 pitches were strikes. . . .

Class AAA Rochester outfielder James Wood was removed from the Red Wings' game in the fifth inning Thursday with right hamstring tightness. Wood, one of the top prospects in baseball, was out of Rochester's lineup Friday; Martinez said the team took him out as a precautionary measure. . . .

Lefty reliever Jose A. Ferrer is up to 120 feet in his throwing program as he rehabs from a strain of his right teres major muscle. Martinez envisions Ferrer could begin throwing from the mound soon. . . .

Right-hander Cade Cavalli is scheduled to throw again Saturday in Florida. He made his first Florida Complex League start last week, tossing 2½ innings with five strikeouts.

Bethune is the spark as Spirit beats Reign, 3-2

SPIRIT FROM D1

can defend and it leads to offense [that] quick, it benefited us."

Bethune put the Spirit ahead in the 21st minute. Kate Wiesner, starting on the left wing instead of at her typical left back, sent a header toward Ouleymata Sarr. Sarr's flicked pass landed near Reign defender Lu Barnes, but Bethune picked it off and placed a 18-yard, left-footed shot into the left corner.

Sarr sparked the Spirit's second goal, sending a long pass to Rodman in the 38th minute. After her initial shot was saved, Rodman was tripped by Seattle keeper Laurel Ivory and earned a penalty. Midfielder Andi Sullivan sent Ivory in the wrong direction for her second goal of the season.

Just before halftime, Sarr headed in a cross from Bethune to put the Spirit up 3-0. The 28-year-old French striker has the third-most goals (six) in the NWSL.

The Reign's first goal came in first-half stoppage time on a header by Veronica Latsko. Playing without leading scorer Bethany Balcer (red card suspension), Seattle took eight of its 13 shots in the first half.

Washington maintained possession and control but created few quality chances. Substitute forward Emery Adames struck from distance for the Reign's second goal in the sixth minute of stoppage time, but the final whistle blew seconds after the restart.

"In that moment [of the opener], we weren't a team yet because we had young players, new coaching staff, so we were building that," González said. "Now I think we are a team, with capital letters."

Polished and promising, Skenes is without a doubt

SKENES FROM D1

trouble in the majors. "This kid's really good, but we have to respect that those are big league hitters up there who are really talented."

Everything is relative for Skenes, whom the Pirates took first overall out of LSU less than a calendar year ago. At 21, he has already given the entire baseball world a reason to turn its eyes toward Pittsburgh every five days. The massive expectations he has earned seem like no problem for his 6-foot-6 frame to carry. He does not look like a player who needs to be coddled as he transitions to the majors. He looks like a player who just needs to be unleashed.

And while it is early, Skenes also resembles an ace of a different era, a rare transformative starter whose presence on the mound alone draws crowds. Steamy Thursday afternoons in May are quiet at most ballparks around the country, but the Pirates announced an attendance of 23,162. The team has drawn

23,000 or more to PNC Park six times this season. Two of those games were Skenes starts.

"Everybody is obviously going to expect him to go out there and dominate everybody," Pirates catcher Joey Bart said. "He'll probably do that. There's a good chance he does. But it's really hard for a kid who was pitching in the SEC tournament last year this time. I really like the way he's composed himself. I've been impressed."

When the Pirates drafted Skenes last summer, his stuff was ready, his repertoire was growing and his maturity was unquestioned. The same could be said of few college pitchers in recent memory.

When he made his much-anticipated debut this month, comparisons to former Washington Nationals ace Stephen Strasburg were as inevitable as they were imperfect. Skenes, like Strasburg, was considered a can't-miss college pitcher with big league polish by the time he entered the draft. Skenes, like Strasburg, moved through the minor



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Unlike Stephen Strasburg, who faced similarly steep expectations as a young pitcher, Paul Skenes is a willing participant in stardom.

leagues quickly after being drafted. Skenes, like Strasburg, had an elite fastball and untouchable secondary stuff, the kind of arsenal that seems likely to fail only if its owner is not healthy enough to wield it.

But Skenes, unlike the reserved and reticent Strasburg, is a willing participant in stardom. He has worn a full suit to the ballpark on start days since his debut, a blossoming trademark of his big league routine. He has a famous girlfriend, gymnast and influencer Livvy Dunne, who posted a selfie in a Pirates hat for her 5.2 million Instagram follow-

ers mere minutes before Skenes' outing Thursday.

And most noticeably, he seems to have no fear. In a recent interview, when asked about big league hitters adjusting to his stuff, Skenes said matter-of-factly: "Go ahead and adjust. Good luck." Thursday, when asked about the fact that he struck out just three Giants, he said he knew San Francisco would put the ball in play and just had to trust that the contact that even the best hitters in the world would make against him would be weak.

"I trust myself over pretty much anyone, any lineup," said

Skenes, explaining that the odds of anyone getting four straight hits against him are not exactly high. So far, he is correct: In three major league starts, Skenes owns a 2.25 ERA, has struck out 21 in 16 innings and has allowed a total of 17 base runners.

The trouble is that Pittsburgh's roster is not yet complete enough that Skenes' arrival vaults the Pirates into immediate contention. In fact, the Pittsburgh bullpen collapsed when Skenes departed Thursday, sending the team to its second straight back-breaking loss and five games under .500.

But Skenes is not the only reason for optimism. The man who started Wednesday, a 22-year-old rookie with a 100-mph fastball, seems capable of shaping a brighter Pirates future, too.

Jared Jones grew up knowing Skenes' name as a kid in Southern California. When Jones needed to warm up for a showcase in the summer of 2019, Skenes caught him. At the time, Skenes had yet to star at Air Force as a two-way force, had yet to transfer to LSU to focus on pitching.

"He was always a catcher and pitcher first. He got to college, got really strong, and I think everything took off from there," Jones said. "And once he got to LSU, he

became a totally different dude."

Jones, who is listed at 6-foot-1 but jokes that he is 5-foot-4, said he regularly teases Skenes about how he, too, can throw 100. Their lockers are next to each other in the Pirates' clubhouse, making it easy to notice that even with his hat on, Jones only rises to Skenes's shoulder. They live together and goof around together, so much so that even two hours before Skenes started Thursday, they were locked in conversation.

"We have a pretty good idea of what we can do here," said Jones, holding out a T-shirt that read "Allegheny Electric Company" and featured pictures of Jones and Skenes drawn in yellow on a black background. "We're pretty excited."

Now that they have seen what they can be in the majors, they have every reason to be. Jones said that after Skenes pitched four innings in his major league debut, he asked Jones a rather silly question.

"Are we going to be pitching back-to-back days for the rest of year?" Skenes asked.

"I think so — that's how rotations work," Jones said.

"Wow," said Skenes, who, having faced big league hitters for the first time, was entirely unafraid to prognosticate.

"That's going to be sick."

MARYLAND 2A SOFTBALL FINAL

Hurricanes' playoff run spoiled at the finish line

RIISING SUN 4,
HUNTINGTOWN 2

BY NOAH FERGUSON

The Huntingtown softball team spent the spring on a quest to prove it deserved a place among Maryland's upper echelon. The Hurricanes passed test after test en route to an appearance in the 2A state championship game Friday at the University of Maryland. Waiting for them on the final stage was undefeated Rising Sun, the reigning state champion.

The Hurricanes held their own against the Tigers but ultimately fell short, 4-2, as the champs pushed across a pair of late runs to retain their title.

"Obviously we're all crushed

we didn't give, I thought, our best effort, but on a day like today, the stars don't always align the way you expect them to," said Hurricanes Coach Mike Johnson, in his 21st season at the helm of the program. "But I'm incredibly proud of this group. They battled all year to be considered as one of the best in the state, and I think they did that."

The Hurricanes (18-4) were a work in progress early in the season as Johnson fiddled with his team's lineup, looking to find the group best suited to lead a deep postseason run. By the time the playoffs rolled around, he had found the formula.

The players, a healthy mix of experienced seniors and talented freshmen, asserted themselves come playoff time. The Hurricanes waltzed their way to the state semifinals, where they

knocked off defending Class 3A state champion Damascus after a six-run outburst in the closing innings.

Huntingtown outscored its playoff opponents 33-6 heading into the title game, a run fueled by a team chemistry that senior Kelsie Bandelow said was fostered across the team's dominant march through the regular season.

"We all came together instead of playing for ourselves," Bandelow said. "Especially in the playoffs, our attitudes toward the game completely changed. . . . We flipped a switch."

The Hurricanes plated their first run in the third when junior Morgan Crawford singled and scored thanks to a pair of errors. Freshman Madisyn Williams added another with a towering home run in the fourth. The game was knotted at 2 in the fifth before the Tigers (24-0) pulled away.

The Hurricanes threatened late, but the clutch hit they needed never came.

"We battled; we kept staying with them," Johnson said. "We were just a hit or two away even in the last inning."

MARYLAND 3A SOFTBALL FINAL

Sophomore steals show for triumphant Warriors

SHERWOOD 6,
LINGANORE 5 (8)

Corb delivers walk-off hit after effort on mound

BY NOAH FERGUSON

It's not easy to step into Sherwood's pitching circle, especially as an underclassman. There's pressure in putting on the Warriors' blue and white uniform, a responsibility to uphold the standards of a seven-time state champion.

Sophomore pitcher Reagan Corb didn't let that pressure stop her from leading the Warriors to the title Friday at the University of Maryland. After pitching eight grueling innings against Linganore in the Maryland Class 3A championship game, Corb stepped to the plate in the bottom of the game's first extra inning and delivered a two-run walk-off hit to right field that handed the Warriors a 6-5 win

and their eighth state championship.

"I've never experienced anything like that [moment]," Corb said. "That was just special, and that's not something everyone can say they've done, and I'm glad that we were able to do it."

Corb pitched a complete game, striking out four and allowing seven hits while also going 3 for 3 at the plate. The sophomore, who earned the starting pitching role over two of her teammates during the regular season, dazzled in the team's biggest moment of the year.

"I told [each of our pitchers] it's going to be about who shows up," Warriors Coach Ashley Barber-Strunk said. "Reagan, she just outshined."

Sherwood (20-1) didn't need a senior-laden team to advance to Friday's state championship game. The Warriors fielded a young group that featured just one senior but entered the game hungry for another piece of hardware.

Sophomore Faith Goolsby got the Warriors on the board in the

first by slapping a two-run triple into left field to grab a 2-1 advantage. The Lancers (18-6) responded with a three-run fifth thanks to back-to-back doubles from Maryland commit Gracie Wilson and sophomore Lilly Trunnell. Meanwhile, Sherwood's bats quieted.

The Warriors found their groove again in the sixth. A walk was followed by consecutive base hits, which loaded the bases for junior Jenna Scott, who delivered a two-run double to tie the game.

Both Corb and Wilson held their own in the seventh, and the game moved to extra innings. The Lancers plated a run in the top of the eighth, but Corb stayed calm at the plate with two runners on in the bottom half. Her shot to right field scored both runners to finish off a dramatic rally.

Corb said she realized she had just won the game as she rounded second and the crowd erupted. She was then enveloped in an emotional hug by Barber-Strunk, who was standing along the third base line. After that, she sprinted to home plate where her teammates were awaiting her.

"I was just hoping that I could make contact on it and at least move one runner in. We were lucky enough to have fast players, and both of them got in," Corb said. "It was great."

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MARYLAND 4A BASEBALL FINAL

With a gritty complete-game shutout, Buckler ends Raiders' 37-year drought

LEONARDTOWN 2, WHITMAN 0

BY EMMETT SIEGEL

Leonardtown was just a single out from glory, grasping on to a two-run lead in the seventh and final inning of Friday's Maryland 4A title game. Whitman had the tying run on base, with Raiders pitcher Will Buckler having issued a walk and hit a batter in the inning. The tension in Waldorf's Regency Furniture Stadium continued to ascend.

But second-year Raiders Coach Austin Guy refused to give up on his belief in Buckler, who was just one out away from a complete-game shutout. He turned to his assistants in the dugout and made his position clear.

"This is his game to win or lose," the coach said.

Buckler answered the call with a three-pitch strikeout, putting the finishing touches on Leonardtown's 2-0 victory over Whitman. The final pitch, an outside slurve, granted the Raiders (15-8) their first state championship since 1987.

"To start the state championship and throw all seven innings — a complete-game shutout — my whole baseball career led me to this," Buckler said. "I will never forget this."

Buckler, who allowed just two hits and struck out four, had a hand in every facet of the Raiders' win. He also effectively fielded his position — accounting for three assists plus a successful pickoff — and came through at the plate.

It took until the fourth inning for either team to push across a



Leonardtown Coach Austin Guy kept starter Will Buckler in after a shaky start to the seventh inning, and the senior rewarded him.

run, but Leonardtown's first rally began when Buckler worked a walk with one out. Courtesy runner Troy Jordan then stole second before coming around on a throwing error.

In the sixth inning, Buckler provided some crucial insurance for himself when he roped a line drive to left field that rolled to the wall to score a runner from first and double Leonardtown's advantage over the Vikings (18-6). After time was called, Buckler turned to the swath of supporters behind the first-base dugout and excitedly galloped back to his teammates, howling with every step.

The senior was able to keep his pitch count low thanks in part to a calm demeanor and laser focus. He refused to let the pressure of the stage or the threat of the Vikings' bats deny his team the title.

"I took it one inning at a time, one batter at a time. Every batter I saw, I thought, 'That's the last guy I have to pitch to,'" Buckler said. "I just kept throwing and throwing until the game was over."

The Raiders started this season hot, then hit a cold spell, struggling to find consistency as their record dropped to 8-8. But their belief in the possibility of a championship never wavered. Any doubters only provided fuel.

When the final pitch was thrown Friday night, tears were shed and hugs were shared. Leonardtown's season-long self-belief was vindicated.

"It's unbelievable. It's the best feeling I've ever had in my entire life, and I pray everybody can have that feeling," senior Hunter Lee said. "Southern Maryland baseball is the best in the state. . . . Never count us out again."

SCOREBOARD

PRO BASKETBALL

NBA playoffs

Table with columns for Eastern Conference and Western Conference matchups, including teams like Celtics, Mavericks, and Nuggets.

Table for Dallas Mavericks vs Minnesota Timberwolves, showing game 1 stats and team records.

PRO BASKETBALL

Table for Eastern Conference and Western Conference matchups, including teams like Cavaliers, Lakers, and Timberwolves.

Table for Minnesota Timberwolves vs Dallas Mavericks, showing game 1 stats and team records.

PRO BASKETBALL

Table for Eastern Conference and Western Conference matchups, including teams like Cavaliers, Lakers, and Timberwolves.

Table for Washington Wizards vs Phoenix Suns, showing game 1 stats and team records.

PRO FOOTBALL

Table for AFC and NFC matchups, including teams like Patriots, Chiefs, and Rams.

Table for Tampa Bay Rays vs Atlanta Braves, showing game 1 stats and team records.

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HOCKEY

Table for Stanley Cup playoffs, including Eastern Conference and Western Conference matchups.

Table for Western Conference matchups, including teams like Oilers, Canucks, and Stars.

Table for Eastern Conference matchups, including teams like Rangers, Bruins, and Panthers.

Table for Western Conference matchups, including teams like Oilers, Stars, and Panthers.

Table for Eastern Conference matchups, including teams like Oilers, Stars, and Panthers.

SOCCER

Table for MLS, including Eastern Conference and Western Conference matchups.

Table for Wednesday's matches, including teams like Atlanta, Chicago, and New York.

Table for Thursday's matches, including teams like Atlanta, Chicago, and New York.

Table for Friday's matches, including teams like Atlanta, Chicago, and New York.

Table for Saturday's matches, including teams like Atlanta, Chicago, and New York.

PGA TOUR

Table for Charles Schwab Challenge, listing players and scores.

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COLLEGE LACROSSE

Table for NCAA men's tournament, including Wednesday and Saturday games.

Table for NCAA men's tournament, including Saturday and Sunday games.

Table for NCAA women's tournament, including Friday and Saturday games.

Table for NCAA women's tournament, including Saturday and Sunday games.

Table for NCAA women's tournament, including Saturday and Sunday games.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Table for NCAA women's regional games, including Texas A&M and Stanford.

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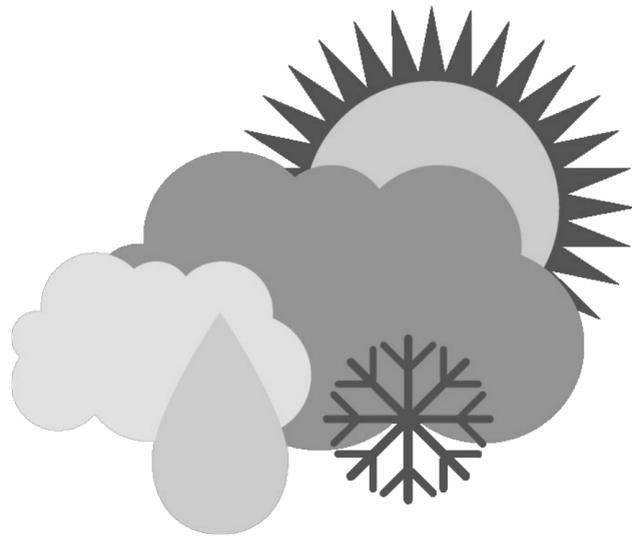
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