



CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Beset by Taliban, finding hope online

Three years into Taliban rule, Afghan women and girls are finding ways online to take back some of what was taken from them in 2021.

Banned from secondary and higher education, they attend online classes, learn foreign languages with the help of AI chatbots and e-books, and trade cryptocurrencies in the hope of becoming financially independent. They have tried to make up for the closing of movie theaters, the shuttering of gyms for women and the banning of music by turning to YouTube's copious offerings of comedy shows, fitness classes and mu-

With their options severely limited under Islamist rule, many Afghan women and girls have turned to the internet for a slice of freedom

BY RICK NOACK IN KABUL

Women celebrate a birthday at a restaurant in Kabul on May 16. Since the Taliban takeover in 2021, Afghan women and girls have faced curbs on their education, work and social life.

sic videos.

But more than a dozen women and girls interviewed in Kabul said they worry that these havens might be short-lived. Many say they have to hide their Instagram and Facebook profiles from their families or that they self-censor their posts for fear of being discovered by the Taliban government.

Some spend so much time online that their friends worry about addiction. Others face tortuously slow internet speeds, or — in rural areas — cannot get online at all.

"The internet is our last hope," said SEE AFGHANISTAN ON A13

Mission of NATO's leaders: 'Trump-proofing' it

BY MICHAEL BIRNBAUM, EMILY RAUHALA, MISSY RYAN AND JOHN HUDSON

Former president Donald Trump doesn't have a seat at the table as NATO leaders gather this week in Washington, but he might as well, as officials strategize about how to adapt the alliance for the possibility that its most senior leader may soon again be

Policymakers aim to lock in support for Ukraine and the alliance itself

a skeptic.

Alliance policymakers have moved control of major elements of military aid to Ukraine away from U.S. command to the NATO

umbrella. They appointed a new NATO secretary general who has a reputation as being especially agile with Trump's unpredictable impulses toward the alliance. They are signing decade-long defense pledges with Ukraine to try to buffer military aid to Kyiv from the ups and downs of politics. And they are pushing up their defense spending, Trump's single biggest anger point when it comes to NATO.

The gathered leaders on Wednesday agreed that they will support Ukraine "on its irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration, including NATO membership" — wording that was subject to intense negotiation in recent weeks, with President Biden initially opposed to using the

SEE NATO ON A10

Tony P: D.C.-based influencer is face of summit's welcome video. B1

'They want to kick us out of our party'

Two GOP women lobbied for Texas Republicans to move on from abortion. Then came the backlash.

BY CAROLINE KITCHENER

Gilda Bayegan did not have the time or the patience to choose her words carefully. She felt the party of Lincoln was in peril — and she had to speak her mind.

"Every time we talk about abortion, we are putting gas in the tank of the Democrats. That's their one winning issue," the 70-year-old state delegate told her fellow Texas Republicans at the party's convention in late May, a gathering of 10,000 delegates from across the state. Her party had already made abortion illegal, she said, and now some were seeking to go even further.

"What are we going to do," she said from the podium, " ... stone women next?"

As she spoke, Bayegan stood not far from her sisters-in-arms, a small group of mostly retired Houston-area women who attended the meeting in suffragist-style sashes and foam Lady Liberty crowns. Drawing inspiration

SEE ABORTION ON A4



DANIELLE VILLASANA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Gilda Bayegan, left, and Michelle Bouchard head to a meeting in Houston on June 19. The state delegates want the GOP to deprioritize abortion, which they see as a "winning issue" for Democrats.

ELECTION 2024

Top Democrats say Biden must show he can win

UNIONS AND CAMPAIGN STAFF HAVE DOUBTS

President sees first defection among party's senators

BY TYLER PAGER, MICHAEL SCHERER AND DAN BALZ

Democratic leaders called on President Biden and his campaign Wednesday to provide convincing evidence of a viable path to victory amid a steady tide of bad battleground state polling and growing concerns that he cannot defeat former president Donald Trump in November.

The calls came as top union leaders expressed grave concerns about his candidacy, more members of Congress and other Democrats called on him to step aside, and even members of Biden's senior campaign staff began to exchange doubt about his prospects.

In a closed-door meeting Wednesday, some of the country's union leaders — many of whom are strident backers of Biden — said Americans' doubts about Biden's ability to do the job were damaging his candidacy and re-

peatedly asked Biden campaign officials for their plan to defeat Trump, according to two people familiar with their comments, who like others for this story spoke on the condition of anonymity to share private comments. Two of the most outspoken leaders were Sara Nelson, the president of the Association of Flight Attendants, and Shawn Fain, the president of the United Auto Workers, two of Biden's biggest labor allies.

In a statement later Wednesday, AFL-CIO leadership "unanimously voted to reaffirm its commitment" to Biden, saying, "No president has been more invested

SEE BIDEN ON A9

Harris hails Biden: Vice president rallies AKA sorority sisters. A7

Looming deadlines: State ballots add to urgency for Democrats. A8

Hollywood: George Clooney calls for president to step aside. C1

Pelosi subtly opens door in calls for replacement

Former speaker may be the only one who can sway Biden, aides say

BY LEIGH ANN CALDWELL, MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR, JACQUELINE ALEMANY AND PAUL KANE

Former House speaker Nancy Pelosi delivered a very early wake-up call to Washington on Wednesday when she deftly sidestepped a straightforward question during a morning television interview: Should President Biden run for reelection?

In a 10-minute TV appearance on "Morning Joe" at 7:40 a.m., Pelosi — who has a decades-long relationship with the president

and still commands the deep respect of her colleagues — left her mark on the biggest political crisis facing the Democratic Party in years.

"It's up to the president to decide if he is going to run. We're all encouraging him to make that decision, because time is running short," the California Democrat said. "He is beloved, he is respected, and people want him to make that decision."

In those few sentences on a program Biden is known to watch, Pelosi didn't directly call for Biden to step aside. But she did significantly reframe a delicate but urgent conversation taking place among Capitol Hill lawmakers, Democratic donors, party strategists and voters after Biden's faltering debate performance two weeks ago raised

SEE PELOSI ON A9

Maryland's Moore still all-in on the president

Governor has remained a steadfast ally, lifting his own profile at same time

BY ERIN COX

KENOSHA, WIS. — Less than 48 hours after President Biden's halting debate performance launched Democrats into a panic, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore was in an awkward position.

Pundits and party leaders had floated his name as a possible Biden replacement atop the ticket, and Moore, a rising Democratic star and one of the party's most persuasive speakers, had to decide what message to give a banquet hall full of anxious Black activists in this critical swing state.

The nation's lone Black governor — and the youngest Democrat to run a state — chose loyalty, selling 81-year-old Biden as the future.

Days later, Moore chose loyalty again as he stood in front of the White House and told reporters: "The president has always had our backs. We're going to have his back as well."

And on Monday, Moore remained steadfast, joining Biden on a call with the campaign's National Finance Committee to reassure donors.

"I am thankful for him, for his leadership, because I've seen it firsthand," Moore told them, according to a partial transcript from the Biden-Harris campaign. "When the odds are stacked against him, he rises. ... Joe Biden has told us he is all-in this election,

SEE MOORE ON A8

IN THE NEWS

Deadly heat wave Dozens have died in the past week, with the toll expected to rise, as cities across the nation bake under record-breaking temperatures. A20

Tree limb kills woman The victim was struck by branches that fell from a swamp white oak at a park in Southeast Washington. B1

THE NATION The NASA astronauts who flew in the Starliner craft are confident it will get them home. A2 Many colleges are applying the Supreme Court ruling on admissions to financial aid. A3

THE WORLD Hezbollah is readying its sophisticated weapons arsenal in case of a war with Israel. A11 Officials say Russia has been recruiting sympathizers online for sabotage in Europe. A12

THE ECONOMY Younger women are breaking down their paychecks on TikTok as part of a push for pay transparency. A15 British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government hopes a playbook modeled on "Bidenomics" will invigorate a lagging economy. A20

THE REGION Authorities confirmed that seven people have died as a result of the extreme heat in the Washington area. B1 Urban planners are circulating conceptual designs that would center the Kennedy Center to the National Mall via rolling parkland. B1

SPORTS Gregg Berhalter is out as coach of the U.S. men's national soccer team after its early exit from Copa America. D1

LOCAL LIVING New appliances have fancy features and are more efficient than older models — but they also have shorter life spans.

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CORRECTION

• A July 7 Metro article about the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground in Richmond incorrectly said that the city acquired two acres at Shockoe Hill three years ago. The city acquired 1.2 acres.

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Astronauts confident craft will get them home

NASA, Boeing continue probing thruster failure on key Starliner voyage

BY CHRISTIAN DAVENPORT

The two NASA astronauts who flew in Boeing's Starliner spacecraft to the International Space Station last month said Wednesday that they have no concerns the capsule will be able to fly them home safely, even as their return has been postponed indefinitely while NASA and Boeing struggle to determine what caused a series of thruster failures and helium leaks.

In a short press briefing from the space station, Barry "Butch" Wilmore, a veteran of two previous spaceflights, said that "we're absolutely confident" in the return trip and that despite the issues on the way to the station, Starliner was "truly impressive."

Still, as he took over manual control of the autonomous spacecraft as it approached the station June 6, he "could tell that the thrust was degraded," he said. "At the time, we didn't know why, obviously. The failures had just happened. You could tell it was degraded, but it was still impressive."

Sunita Williams, who is also on her third spaceflight, said she has "a real good feeling in my heart that the spacecraft will bring us home, no problem."

But when that will happen is still unclear. NASA and Boeing are continuing to conduct ground tests to see if they can figure out why five of the spacecraft's "reaction control thrusters," which are used to position the vehicle, stopped working during the approach to the station. Four of the five thrusters ultimately came



Barry "Butch" Wilmore, left, and Sunita Williams in a vestibule between the International Space Station and Starliner spacecraft, in a photo released July 2. Their return has been indefinitely delayed.

back online and worked properly, allowing Starliner to successfully dock. NASA has said it won't attempt to use the fifth thruster on the return trip. The spacecraft is outfitted with a total of 28 such thrusters on the service module, which is used to provide power and much of the vehicle's propulsion.

In addition to those problems, Starliner has sprung five helium leaks in the propulsion system. NASA has said the leaks are small and that the spacecraft has plenty of helium, which is used to pressurize the propulsion system, for the rest of the mission.

In a separate briefing Wednesday, Steve Stich, who oversees NASA's commercial crew program, said that if all the testing

reveals no major issues with the thrusters, the crew could return as early as the end of July. "But we'll just follow the data each step at a time, and then at the right time, figure out when the right undock opportunity is," he said.

The mission is Starliner's first flight with humans on board, a test designed to see how the vehicle performs before NASA allows a full contingent of four astronauts to fly to the space station for stays as long as six months. SpaceX, the other company NASA relies on for crew transportation, has been flying astronauts to the space station since 2020 in its Dragon capsule.

Williams and Wilmore were initially supposed to stay on the space station for only about 10

days, but then NASA delayed the return three times before pushing it back indefinitely while it seeks to better understand the spacecraft's problems.

The teams have been running tests at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, mimicking the flight profile to and from the space station to try to see if they can determine what caused the problems.

"Really what we're doing is just taking the time to make sure that we have looked under every rock and every stone," Stich said. "Just to make sure that there's nothing else that would surprise us."

In a briefing late last month, he said that the crew members were not stuck in space and that there were no plans for any kind of

rescue operation. "I want to make it clear that Butch and Sunita aren't stranded in space," he said. "Our plan is to continue to return them on Starliner and return them home at the right time."

On Wednesday, he reiterated that the "prime option today is to return Butch and Sunita on Starliner. Right now, we don't see any reason why that wouldn't be the case." Referring to SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft, he added that "we have two vehicles, two different systems that we could use to return crew, and so we have a little bit more time to go through the data and then make a decision as to whether we need to do anything different."

He added that there's "been no discussion of sending another Dragon to rescue to the Starliner crew."

NASA has repeatedly said that Starliner is cleared to fly the astronauts home in the event of an emergency. Late last month, Wilmore and Williams got a real-life test when they were forced to board Starliner after a satellite came apart in orbit, potentially threatening the space station. The debris passed without a problem, and Starliner "worked exceptionally well and as envisioned for this case," Ed Van Cise, a NASA flight director, said in a statement.

While they have been on the station, Williams and Wilmore have continued to test the spacecraft, including loading it up with a full contingent of four astronauts to test its life-support systems.

Williams said being on the orbiting laboratory "feels like coming back home. It feels good to float around. It feels good to be in space and work up here with the International Space Station team. So yeah, it's great to be up here. I'm not complaining that we're here for a couple extra weeks."

Wildfire 'burn scars' bring flash floods to New Mexico village

BY RACHEL PANNETT

The alpine resort village of Ruidoso, N.M., was pummeled by flash floods again Tuesday, after "burn scars" from the South Fork and Salt wildfires left the soil unable to absorb rainfall, upending recovery efforts and underscoring the growing climate risks to tourist-dependent towns.

Burned soil can be as water-repellent as pavement, according to the National Weather Service, and it doesn't require a lot of rainfall to produce a flash flood. Tuesday's deluge isn't the first Ruidoso has encountered: Evacuation orders were issued for flash flooding in June as authorities were still battling blazes in the area.

Bjorn Adolpho, a 36-year-old construction worker, was working Tuesday afternoon on a job replacing wooden retaining

walls destroyed by the wildfires in a Ruidoso neighborhood.

He was returning from lunch shortly after 1 p.m. when it began to rain. Within minutes, he said, he could see water cascading down the mountainside across burned-out areas. Unable to return to the job site as the roads became slick with mud, he backtracked through the village to a crossing where he was stopped by floodwaters.

A torrent of muddy water gushed down the road toward a narrow bridge, filled with railway ties and other construction debris. Videos he posted on social media highlight the extent of the devastation. In one such video, a double garage is torn from its foundations and swept into the fast-moving waters. Within moments, only its red-pitched roof was visible above the floodwaters. Another shows the rainfall runoff streaming like braided rivers through the remains of burned-out houses.

Adolpho said he is struggling to get his head around the new reality for the fire-ravaged area: What would previously have been considered "just a regular amount of rain" now can quickly cause major damage as debris



SPC. JOSE MONTOYA/NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD/AP

Floodwater flows over a bridge in Ruidoso, N.M., on June 29. Flash floods pummeled the resort village once again on Tuesday.

piles up around bridges and streets are gummed up with mud. "So then everything around you starts flooding," he said.

The time between the start of the rainfall and the flash flooding was about a half-hour, he estimated. With no time to react, he left his tools on the job site. He also saw a man rescued from a home where he had been trapped with his dog. Adolpho was re-

lieved to learn later that the man was okay.

A flash flood warning was in place until 6 p.m. Tuesday, with residents advised to avoid burn-scarred areas and to move to higher ground. No injuries were reported. A flood watch remains in place through Wednesday for parts of New Mexico, with weather officials warning that torrential rainfall rates up to two

inches per hour would create the kind of runoff that could produce more flash flooding. Many people left the area during the wildfires and have not yet returned, or they have no homes to return to, Adolpho said.

What's happening here underscores the compounding risks of climate change in small communities that are reliant on tourism. Normally at this time of the year, Ruidoso, a town of about 7,700 people, would be buzzing with visitors.

Adolpho said it's a popular haunt for Texans who frequent the racetrack, casino and golf course resorts. But this year, they are staying away, even after the fires have been contained.

"If no one comes to town and no one's spending any money, these guys are going out of business," he said. Some residents are leaving, too.

Adolpho, a Hawaii native, has lived in the area about seven years with his wife and four children. He applied for a job as a maintenance worker for the log cabin homes that are normally rented by summer tourists, but they are all empty after the fires and the floods.

"Jobs are tough," he said.

DIGEST

ARKANSAS

Petitions for abortion ballot move rejected

Arkansas election officials on Wednesday rejected petitions submitted for an abortion rights ballot measure that organizers hoped to put before voters this fall in a predominantly Republican state.

The secretary of state's office rejected the petitions submitted on Friday by supporters of the proposal, saying the group didn't

submit statements required regarding paid signature gatherers.

Organizers on Friday submitted more than 101,000 signatures. They needed at least 90,704 signatures from registered voters and a minimum number from 50 counties.

In his letter to organizers, Secretary of State John Thurston said that even if his office accepted the signatures it determined came from volunteers the total would amount to 87,382, below the

required amount.

A spokesperson for Arkansas for Limited Government, the group behind the measure, said its legal team was reviewing the state's letter.

The measure would have barred laws banning abortion in the first 20 weeks of gestation and allowed the procedure later in pregnancy in cases of rape, incest, threats to the woman's health or life, or if the fetus would be unlikely to survive birth.

The U.S. Supreme Court removed the nationwide right to abortion with a 2022 ruling, which sparked a national push to have voters decide the matter state by state. An Arkansas law banning abortion took effect when the court issued its ruling. Arkansas' current ban allows abortion only to protect the mother's life in a medical emergency.

—Associated Press

LOUISIANA

Year-old baby found crawling by highway

A Louisiana sheriff says a 1-year-old "miracle baby" survived two days of sometimes stormy weather before a truck driver spotted him crawling along a roadside the day after his 4-year-

old brother was found dead and his mother was arrested in Mississippi.

Calcasieu Parish Sheriff Gary "Stitch" Guillory said the baby had numerous bug bites but otherwise appeared to be in good condition.

Autopsy reports were pending on the 4-year-old who was found Monday, Guillory said Tuesday in Lake Charles, about 200 miles west of New Orleans. The body had been found in a lake behind an Interstate 10 welcome center near the Texas state line.

Authorities investigating the 4-year-old's death learned that he had last been seen Saturday with his mother, Aaliyah Jack, 25, of Lake Charles, and the 1-year-old. Fearing the 1-year-old was dead, authorities prepared Tuesday morning to search the water where the dead child was found. Then a truck driver called 911 after spotting the baby.

Hurricane Beryl had struck east Texas early Monday, and the search for the child played out amid bands of intermittent, heavy rain and high wind gusts.

Jack was arrested Monday night in Meridian, Miss., more than 350 miles away. She was to be extradited to Louisiana, where she faced a charge of failure to report a missing child.

—Associated Press

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POLITICS & THE NATION

At universities, race-based scholarships are vanishing

Supreme Court ruling on admissions has also affected financial aid

BY DANIELLE DOUGLAS-GABRIEL

Duke University recently discontinued a 45-year-old scholarship that covered tuition, currently about \$66,000 a year, and housing costs of some Black undergraduate students.

The University of Iowa has changed the selection criteria for its Advantage Iowa Award, which dispenses more than \$9 million a year in financial help to first-year students from historically underrepresented groups. White students, who previously weren't eligible, can now apply.

Across the four-campus University of Missouri system, officials are changing the eligibility rules for \$17.2 million in institutional and donor-funded scholarships earmarked for students from certain racial or ethnic groups. Race will no longer be considered in scholarship applications.

In the year since the Supreme Court ruled colleges could no longer consider an applicant's race as a factor in admissions, a growing number of schools have also applied the principles underlying the ruling to financial aid. Nearly 50 colleges and universities, mostly public institutions, have paused, ended or reconfigured hundreds of race-conscious scholarships worth millions of dollars to comply with the ruling, according to a Washington Post tally. The awards identified are worth at least \$45 million but probably amount to much more, The Post found.

Republican state leaders and conservative activists say race-conscious scholarships and grants disadvantage White students in the same ways as race-conscious admissions policies. The court's ruling, which overturned the use of race in college admissions, didn't mention financial aid, but conservatives say universities should interpret it broadly to eliminate any race-based policies.

"The court gave us such a clear window into how it was thinking about race," said Kenji Yoshino, a law professor at the New York University School of Law. "There isn't really a legal foot to stand on to fight for these scholarships."

Higher education experts worry that if colleges and universities continue to walk away from race-conscious scholarships, it could have a more profound impact on diversity in higher education than ending affirmative action in admissions. While most selective schools have used race-conscious admissions policies to achieve diversity, far more colleges and



CRAIG HUDSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Supreme Court ruled last year that colleges cannot consider an applicant's race as an admission factor. Though the decision did not mention financial aid, schools have applied it to their scholarships.

universities rely on offering students of color financial help.

Cost is a key barrier for many of these students, financial aid expert Mark Kantrowitz said. Yet, federal data shows that Black and Hispanic students are less likely to receive college scholarships than White students, he said.

The impact of the court's decision is "multifold," said C.J. Powell, director of advocacy for the National Association for College Admission Counseling. Federal Pell Grants, which have helped millions of low-to-moderate-income students attend college, have not kept up with the rising cost of tuition and merit-based aid tends to benefit wealthy and White students, Powell said.

"There are going to be fewer avenues for students of color to reliably afford higher education" if the trend continues, he said.

An emerging trend

Republican state lawmakers have been a driving force behind the retreat from race-conscious scholarships.

In Wisconsin, the Republican-controlled Assembly passed legislation in November to ban state colleges and universities from considering race in awarding state financial aid. The measure didn't pass the Senate, but university officials began altering their programs anyway.

The University of Wisconsin system is removing race as a factor in more than 160 scholarships, grants, fellowships, study-abroad and hiring programs, according to the system's director of media relations, Mark Pitsch. Individual universities, he said, are also discussing scholarship criteria with donors who funded specific awards to ensure they comply with the court's ruling.

In January, Ohio Attorney Gen-

eral Dave Yost (R) warned colleges that considering race in financial aid is just as unconstitutional as using it in admissions. Some colleges in the state immediately began reviewing their institutional scholarships and pausing some awards while they worked with donors to change their terms.

University officials say they are trying to navigate mandates from state leaders without alienating donors, some of whom have re-

"The court gave us such a clear window into how it was thinking about race. There isn't really a legal foot to stand on to fight for these scholarships."

Kenji Yoshino, law professor at the New York University School of Law

sisted any changes to the terms of their contributions.

"I'm deeply disappointed," said Andrew Alexander, who funds an annual scholarship for underrepresented student journalists at Ohio University, his alma mater. "I feel an obligation to try to help young people at a university that helped me. And I think the university is trying to come up with a satisfactory solution."

Alexander's scholarship, which provides selected students about \$1,500 a year, is among 130 gift agreements under evaluation at the university. The awards represent less than 1 percent of the \$400 million in scholarships that

Ohio University provides a year, which Alexander said are still essential.

"It's a modest scholarship, but ... for some students, \$1,500 can be the difference that enables them to pursue a college degree or to drop out," Alexander, a former ombudsman of The Washington Post, said of his scholarship. He hopes it can be reconfigured to still meet the goal of achieving diversity in newsrooms, he said.

Ohio University said in a statement it was reviewing its selection criteria on various scholarships to comply with the court's ruling.

Hours after the justices issued their opinion last year, Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey (R) told universities to stop using race-based standards to make decisions about "admissions, scholarships, programs, and employment."

In response, the University of Missouri system changed the terms of most endowed scholarships. But the system has spent the past year negotiating with donors whose scholarships don't allow such changes without their permission, said Christian Basi, director of public affairs for the Missouri system.

System leaders have been unable to reach some donors or hit an impasse with others who object to the change, Basi said. With 53 holdouts remaining, the University of Missouri system petitioned state court in May for the authority to scrub the racial criteria in those contracts without the donors' consent.

"We value all of our donors very much, and their contributions to help relieve students and families of financial stress are very much appreciated," Basi said. "We have been working hard

to engage with donors and continue conversations wherever we can, while also complying with state and federal law."

The impasse has put the system at odds with some benefactors, including Mary Willis and Cynthia Willis-Esqueda, sisters who helped create the Frank Neal Willis Jr. Minority Scholarship Fund at the University of Missouri at Kansas City in 2004.

The grant, which provides \$500 awards to dozens of Black, Hispanic and Native students annually, honors their father's tenure as a professor at UMKC and legacy as a civil rights activist in Kansas City, the sisters said.

"We are very angry that anybody would dare to say that we can't decide where our little bit of inheritance goes. It's just unbelievable," said Willis, a professor of sociology and anthropology at Missouri State University. "We don't have much to give, but we're all still committed to our community being an equal and fair one."

The family is considering taking legal action to stop the system from making the change without their permission, Willis said.

Basi declined to comment on the family's concerns.

Leveling the playing field

Conservative activists have seized on the shifting legal landscape to advance long-standing efforts to dismantle race-based policies in higher education.

In 2021, the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty sued the Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board over the use of minority scholarships. The case was dismissed in 2022. The conservative group is now appealing the decision.

"Before the [Supreme Court] decision, diversity could sometimes justify race-conscious measures," said Daniel Lenington, a lawyer for the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL). "After the decision, diversity can never justify race-conscious measures."

The Equal Protection Project, led by Cornell University clinical law professor William Jacobson, has filed 28 complaints against race-based scholarships with the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights over the past year. The complaints challenge the legality of minority grants and fellowships at Indiana University Columbus, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Kansas State University and Western Kentucky University, among others.

Half of the scholarships were either shelved or had their eligibility requirements changed after the complaints were filed, Jacobson said.

Some universities say they have begun changing the terms of scholarships in ways they hope will still achieve diversity, including focusing on students from low-income households or who are the first in their families to

attend college.

At Northwest Missouri State University, money for a "multicultural scholarship" is being used instead to create a scholarship for first-generation college students. Students who are already recipients of the sunset scholarship can have their awards renewed, the university said.

At Duke, officials will allocate funding from the defunct scholarship for Black undergraduates to a new leadership program and to needs-based financial aid. The scholarship was established to honor Reginaldo Howard, the first Black president of the Associated Students of Duke University.

The reimagined scholarship will "expand the impact of Howard's legacy to many more Duke students with a commitment to leadership and social justice," Duke Provost Alec Gallimore said. The move, he said, "is aligned with our commitment to increase support for our Black students and to ensure all of our students have everything they need."

But Powell, from the National Association for College Admission Counseling, worries that a focus on income or first-generation status would ignore the reality of racial disparities in wealth and access to opportunities.

"Just because you're a middle-class Black person or high-income Latinx person doesn't mean you have the same access to opportunity in the K-12 space," Powell said.

Colleges could also tailor scholarships to target students in certain Zip codes, first-generation STEM students or ethnic studies majors, said David Hinojosa, director of the Educational Opportunities Project at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

"There are lots of options that colleges and universities can still engage in to ensure that students across races and backgrounds are welcomed and able to attend their university," Hinojosa said.

Universities could also learn from law firms that have shifted the focus of their diversity fellowships from an applicant's race to their commitment to equity, said Yoshino, the NYU School of Law professor. Affirmative action opponent Edward Blum dropped his discrimination lawsuit against the law firm Morrison Foerster after the firm opened its program to anyone who demonstrated a commitment to equity and inclusion in the legal profession.

But universities should proceed with caution when trying to achieve diversity through other means, Yoshino said. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. warned that "what cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly," signaling that workarounds could run afoul of the law, Yoshino said.

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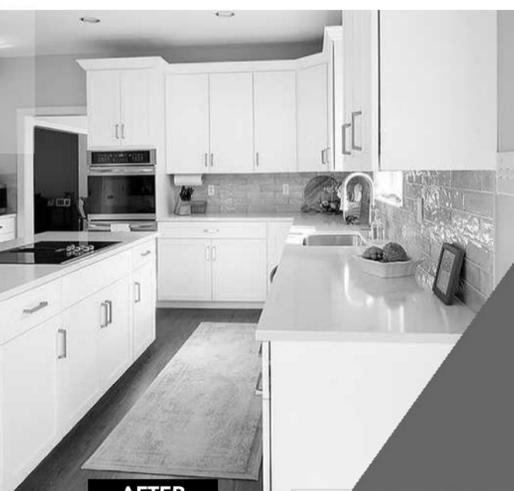
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In Texas, a GOP divided by its focus on abortion

ABORTION FROM A1

from both Ronald Reagan and Gloria Steinem, they'd left their tree-lined neighborhoods for the fluorescent lights of a San Antonio convention center, all in pursuit of the same goal: Persuade the Texas Republican Party to stop talking about abortion.

Republican leaders have struggled with how to address abortion since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* two years ago, faced with dueling political realities: While outlawing abortion has been an animating moral cause for the party for generations, new abortion restrictions are deeply unpopular. After appointing three conservative justices who helped topple *Roe*, former president Donald Trump has sought to distance himself from the issue, saying as little as possible and ultimately punting the question to the states.

But many on the right are resisting these efforts to leave the abortion issue behind. Christian conservatives, a key part of the party's base, have continued to pressure Trump and other Republicans to crack down, arguing that fighting abortion is a core tenet of the Republican platform — and that the battle should continue until abortion is eradicated nationwide.

"I don't want to stand before God and say, 'Listen, we had to deny these biblical principles so we could win the election,'" said James Buntrock, a pastor and Republican Senate district leader in Harris County, Tex., where Bayegan lives. "We have to stand for what's right. I don't care what it costs."

Those tensions will be on display at the Republican National Convention next week. Members of the platform committee voted Monday to replace the party's current abortion platform, which calls for national restrictions, with one that reflects Trump's leave-it-to-the-states approach. Those changes, widely expected to be ratified by the national party in Milwaukee, would offer a new road map to Republicans running in competitive congressional races, granting them permission to deprioritize an issue that has long had a place at the heart of the party.

Bayegan's plea in San Antonio offered a preview of the national debate. She asked the state party's Legislative Priorities Committee not to name abortion one of the party's top eight agenda items, as it had been for almost a decade.

"I'm up here begging you not to make it one of our priorities," Bayegan said, wearing a giant homemade button that read "Win or Else!" The vast majority of voters wanted the party to prioritize increased border security and cracking down on crime, she added — not stricter abortion laws.

The committee members did not seem interested.

"Do you believe that a child in the womb is a human being?" asked one.

"Do you believe it matters what God believes, . . . or do you think it just matters to win elections?" asked another.

Bayegan knew she shouldn't roll her eyes, but she found these high-and-mighty scripture-citers so exasperating, she later said: Did they really want a Democrat in the White House for four more years?

When the state's thousands of delegates voted on the platform later that weekend, Bayegan had to believe they would see things differently.

Surely, she thought, most Texans had more sense.

The campaign to stop talking about abortion went public two months earlier at a conference center in Houston's Senate District 15 — when another Republican state delegate from Harris County, Michelle Bouchard, realized her neighbors may choose to support even stricter abortion laws if she didn't stand up and say something.

"Woah, hold up. What world are we in?" Bouchard, 62, recalled asking, stunned that her colleagues wanted to submit a resolution for the state convention that would push the party to further restrict abortion pills. They should be focused on helping "the children who are already here," she said to a group of nearly 200 Republicans. "I move to strike this plank in its entirety."

When Bouchard sat down, another woman stood up to make the same argument — ultimately persuading the majority of their district's delegates to vote down the measure.

The women had no idea that, at a convention for another Senate district a few miles across town, Bayegan was staging a similar coup.

Bouchard and Bayegan met at a meeting of the Magic Circle, a Barbara-Bush-era club for Republican women — and decided to join forces, launching a formal campaign together six weeks ahead of the state convention. With a subtle side-eye to the "Right to Life" movement, Bayegan came up with the name "Right to Win."

As they started their weekly meetings, Bayegan and Bouchard quickly realized how much they complemented each other: two "alpha females," as they liked to call themselves, with different strengths.

Bayegan — with her well-teased Texas hair and chunky earrings purchased on French eBay — embodied the independent, free-wheeling ethos of the state where she'd lived most of her life: Say what you think, and don't apologize for it. As her rich retired friends planned cruises and cooed over grandchildren, she became a Republican precinct chair and ran her local civic association, where she penned snarky missives on how to stop your dog from pooping on your neighbor's lawn.

"I'm not the grandmother type," Bayegan said.

To their operation Bouchard — who would soon also become a precinct chair — brought the business sense of a longtime executive with a penchant for a good blazer. After 15 years running a nonprofit for Mehmet Oz, the TV doctor of Oprah fame who in 2022 ran unsuccessfully for



Gilda Bayegan is frustrated by the Texas GOP's focus on abortion. "What are we going to do," she said, "stone women next?"



PHOTOS BY DANIELLE VILLASANA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Michelle Bouchard fixes her hair. She faced an effort to remove her precinct chair title after opposing further abortion restrictions.

Senate in Pennsylvania, she knew her way around an Excel spreadsheet and quickly urged Bayegan to think bigger: Make a logo. Reach out to reporters. Get online. In her second act as a community organizer, Bouchard earlier this year derailed a multi-million dollar sidewalk-widening effort that would have cost the city 400 trees.

While they disagreed about some things — Bayegan could have done without the suffragist sashes — on the most important issues the two women were completely in sync. They both loved their party deeply. They longed for "stability" and "order" amid the rising price of groceries and what they saw as a total disregard for U.S. borders.

They were determined to get their country back on track. And despite their strong personal distaste for the former president, who Bouchard sometimes calls a "pig with hair," they both thought Trump was the best man for the job and planned to vote for him in November.

The women appreciated how Trump had handled the abortion issue, refusing to endorse a national abortion ban despite intense pressure from national anti-abortion groups.

"I think he has his pulse on how most Americans feel about abortion," Bouchard said. "I think he is listening to the majority of Republicans on this and not to the fringe."

As the state convention neared, more and more women from Harris County joined the ranks of Right to Win, along with a few men. While they all agreed their party should move on from abortion, they were divided on the issue itself. Bouchard and Bayegan both support abortion rights, long believing that Republican values of personal freedom

and limited government lend themselves to that position. Other members identified as fiercely "pro-life."

The important thing, Bayegan said, was not to get bogged down in those differences.

"We cannot do this from a pro-choice point of view," Bayegan repeatedly said to her group. "This needs to encompass every Republican out there who wants to succeed in the election," she said — because "pro-life" Republicans wanted to win, too.

In San Antonio, six Right to Win members took turns addressing the key policy committee, which would make recommendations to delegates for which issues to prioritize, explaining their view that abortion should not be anywhere near the top of the list.

The backlash was harsh. When a group member spoke, audience members often fired back with a string of personal attacks, questioning their faith and values. One person told them they were going to "burn in hell," they said. Others insinuated they weren't real Republicans.

"These individuals are living in an alternate reality," Matt Rinaldi, the former chairman of the Texas Republican Party, tweeted during the convention. "Principles win elections."

Rinaldi did not respond to a request for comment.

At the convention and for months leading up to it, a powerful contingent of anti-abortion leaders led by Texas Right to Life, the state's largest anti-abortion group, had been pushing for Republicans to enact even stricter abortion laws — frustrated that thousands of abortion pills were still reaching Texas women by mail.

Texas Right to Life appeared to garner significant support at the convention, said Rolando Garcia, a top Republican leader in Bouchard's Senate district; Right to Win, he added, not so much.

"I don't think they won over anyone," said Garcia, a staunch anti-abortion advocate.

The crux of his neighbor's campaign was factually incorrect, he said: Abortion restrictions may not be playing well politically in other states, he said — but this was Texas. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, who signed the first strict abortion ban to take effect anywhere in the country, won reelection by a wide margin in the midterm elections in 2022.

Bayegan and Bouchard did their best to buck up their team, reminding them their work was just the beginning. They'd be back at the next convention in 2026, their voices louder and

stronger. The Republicans Bayegan called the "FFRRs" — or "far far religious rights" — couldn't control the party forever, she said.

"We arrived with about a hundred supporters and left with over four hundred!" Bouchard wrote in an email to the group.

Two weeks later, the Texas Republican Party released its official list of the eight issues they'd be prioritizing for the next two years — the result of a convention-wide vote.

Abortion was not on it.

Bouchard took a sip from her chili-powder-rimmed margarita and smiled, looking out at a group of about 40 Harris County Republicans.

"Let me tell you something," she said on a Wednesday night in mid-June, wearing a white sash with the words "Right to Win" bedazzled in red glitter. "When we went to the convention, we tried to manage expectations. We said ... 'Don't expect we're going to change something.'"

She flashed Bayegan the triumphant grin of a winner.

"Then those legislative priorities came out."

With abortion officially off the priorities list, she reasoned, Republican lawmakers would no longer feel the pressure of the party platform when voting on abortion restrictions. They would be free to focus on other things.

But as Bouchard and Bayegan celebrated at their favorite Mexican restaurant, a group of anti-abortion neighbors were devising a plan to keep their influence in check.

Soon after the convention, a coalition of Harris County Republicans began discussing what could be done about Right to Win, said Buntrock, the pastor, who was among those concerned.

Despite their relatively small numbers, he said, "Their voice was getting louder and louder," he said. "The louder they got, the more people were talking about it."

Less than 24 hours after their victory event, a Republican Party friend called Bouchard with a warning: Buntrock and others were circulating a petition to formally condemn Right to Win and any other Republican who did not prioritize a belief in "the sanctity of innocent human life."

The friend forwarded the resolution, which Harris County's anti-abortion flank was planning to bring to a vote at a meeting of local Republican precinct chairs that Saturday.

"Those who unapologetically oppose the foundational Princi-

ples of this Party ... should not be permitted to weaken those Principles and should not be welcomed into the Party leadership, whether elected or appointed, at any level," read the document signed by 50 Republicans in the area, including Buntrock and Garcia. The resolution referred to members of Right to Win as "self-styled Republicans."

Bouchard picked up her phone to call Bayegan, her hands shaking.

"Gilda," she recalled saying. "They're trying to strip us of our precinct chair titles. They want to kick us out of our party."

Bouchard had intended to keep her cool at the precinct chair meeting that weekend. But when she saw Garcia making small talk by the doughnuts and coffee, she couldn't stop herself from yelling.

"Who do you think you are?" she recalled saying. "Who do all of you think you are?"

"I'm a lifelong Republican," Bouchard continued, well aware that people were staring. "I was in the second row of Reagan's inauguration. How dare you try to kick me out of the party as a duly-elected precinct chair?"

Across the room at the University of Houston student center, Bayegan had cornered Buntrock, giving him an earful until he started quoting scripture.

"I want you to know my supporters and I are some of the hardest working precinct chairs in Harris County," Bayegan recalled saying.

While Buntrock held firm, Garcia said he agreed that Bouchard and the others shouldn't be stripped of their precinct chair titles — ultimately persuading his colleagues to coalesce around a watered-down version of the petition. The new resolution reaffirmed the party's commitment to protect "innocent preborn children," but stopped short of expelling Bouchard and Bayegan from party leadership.

Bouchard and Bayegan felt relieved their colleagues hadn't gone further. If they hadn't put up a fight, they said, they weren't sure what would have happened.

"This is not about abortion," Bouchard said to her colleagues gathered at the meeting, after the new version of the measure passed. "This is about freedom of speech."

The Republican Party she'd proudly belonged to for almost five decades stood for speaking your mind, she reminded them — for diversity of ideas and dissent.

She believed that party had been "hijacked" — and she wanted it back.

97-year-old judge loses lawsuit challenging suspension from appeals court

BY TOBI RAJI

A 97-year-old federal judge has lost a lawsuit she brought against her colleagues over her suspension for refusing to undergo a neurological examination amid concerns about her fitness.

Judge Pauline Newman was suspended from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit for a year after she declined the exam, an interview with a judicial committee and a request to share her medical records. Her lawsuit challenged the constitutionality of the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act, which established the process for the investigation.

On Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Christopher R. Cooper dismissed

the case, ruling that Newman had failed to show how the 1980 act violated the Fourth Amendment and that a provision of the act is not unconstitutionally vague. Cooper rejected Newman's other constitutional challenges to the act in February.

"Though some investigative conduct might trigger Fourth Amendment concerns, and even constitute violations of an individual's privacy rights, Judge Newman has not shown that every application of the provision offends the Fourth Amendment," Cooper wrote.

Greg Dolin, Newman's lawyer, vowed to appeal Cooper's ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and eventually to the Supreme

Court.

"Judge Newman plans to fight it for as long as it takes because this is not just about her, it's about the integrity and independence of the judiciary as well as the entire constitutional structure," Dolin said.

Newman's public dispute over her fitness as a judge comes amid broader concerns about the mental capabilities of aging public servants, from the late Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). President Biden, 81, has faced pressure to end his bid for reelection following his poor debate performance in June. Biden, who is the oldest person ever to hold the office, has vowed to stay in the race.

In an interview, Newman said she supports term limits for federal judges to get new generations of people on the bench. She also reflected on public concerns about aging federal judges and government officials.

"There is certainly room for thinking about how the nation should handle the fact that we're all living longer than we used to," Newman said. "All the noise about President Biden having lost some of his cognitive abilities, I think that this happens to all of us."

Newman said she thought about retiring over the years, but "I looked around me at the court and I wasn't too enchanted with all of my colleagues, and felt that I could serve the nation better by

staying on the court than by quitting."

The Federal Circuit hears patent and trademark cases as well as claims involving government contracts and benefits. Newman, who was appointed to the circuit by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, is known for her dissents and taking her time to write them. Over the last 40 years, she has written more than 300 dissenting opinions.

In March 2023, after judges and staff expressed concerns about Newman's ability to perform the work of an active judge, Chief Judge Kimberly Moore urged her to retire or take senior status, a form of semi-retirement that creates a vacancy on the court.

Newman declined. Moore then convened a panel of three judges to investigate Newman's competence.

The committee's court filings allege that Newman, who is the oldest sitting judge in the country to not take senior status, has shown "significant mental deterioration" since suffering a heart attack in 2021. The committee also says Newman takes far longer than other judges to decide cases and writes fewer opinions.

Newman has asked for the investigation to be transferred to a different court, citing conflicts of interest.

She hasn't received any new cases since the investigation began.



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CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

A new peril for a tree that survived the last ice age

California's Jurupa Oak is older than almost any other plant on Earth. Now, scientists and locals warn, development could doom it.

BY SHANNON OSAKA

JURUPA VALLEY, CALIF. — At first glance, one of the world's oldest living organisms doesn't look like much — a collection of shrubs nestled atop a hill in a rocky gully. But those shrubs are just the crown of a giant, spreading oak tree, 90 feet long and 30 feet wide. Most of the tree is underground.

Estimated to be 13,000 to 18,000 years old, the tree — known as the Jurupa Oak — is older than almost any other plant on Earth. It has survived an ice age and rapid climate warming. Its leaves may have brushed against saber-toothed cats and 500-pound ground sloths. But now, environmentalists and locals worry that the ancient tree is under threat from a more quotidian force in modern California: development.

The Planning Commission of Jurupa Valley, a city of 100,000 an hour east of Los Angeles, is poised to approve a 1.4-square-mile development that includes a business park, 1,700 homes and an elementary school. Light-industrial buildings would stand just a few hundred feet from the ancient tree.

The city believes that the project will boost the local economy. The site's developer has said it plans to protect the tree, but environmentalists believe that the construction and resulting development could be deadly to the Jurupa Oak.

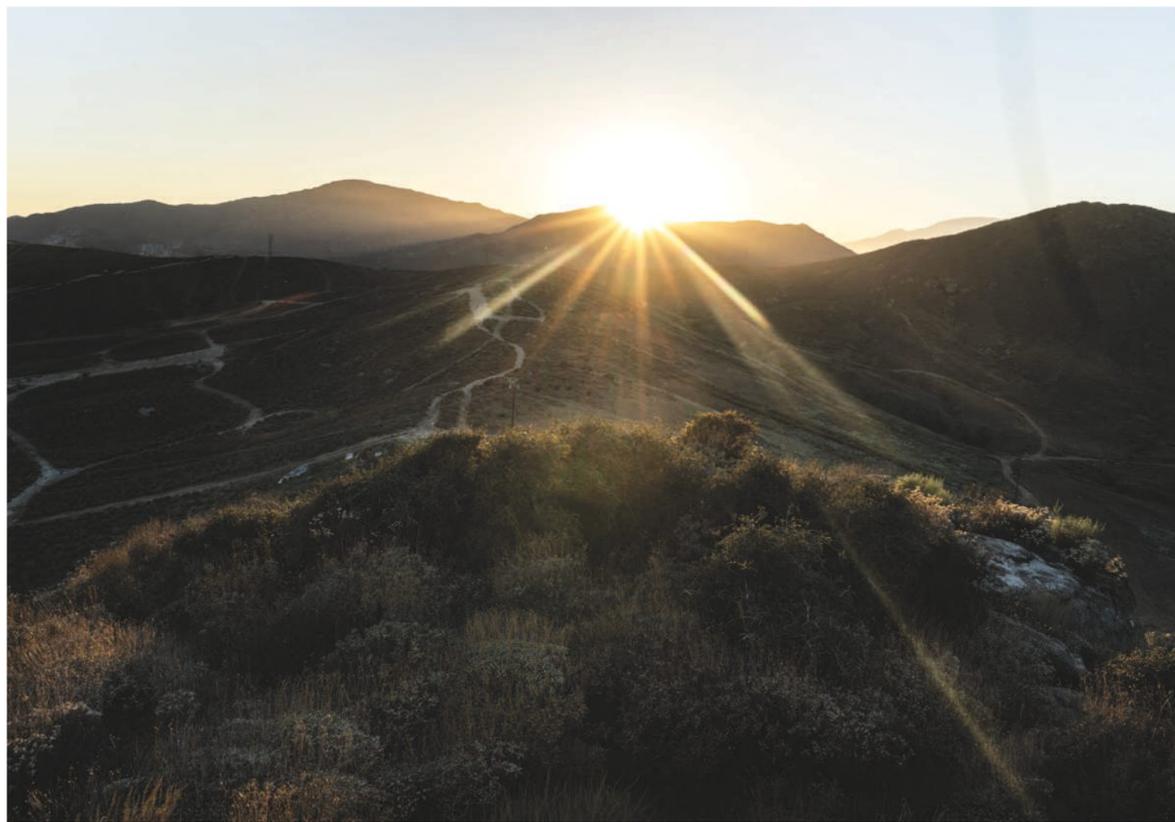
"It's unique among most things on the planet," said Aaron Echols, conservation chair for the Riverside-San Bernardino chapter of the California Native Plant Society. "We need to be absolutely sure that we're not going to cause harm to this plant."

The tree has plunged the Jurupa Valley into an ongoing debate in California: How to balance the state's growth and need for housing with protecting its rich biodiversity?

Think about the oldest tree on Earth and you may picture a bristlecone pine known as "Methuselah" and estimated to be close to 5,000 years old. The Jurupa Oak fits into a different category: It's a Palmer's oak, which is a species of "clonal tree," a network of genetically identical shrubs connected through a shared root system. Unlike in normal trees, none of the original tissue is still present; instead, after a wildfire, the tree will spring out new, genetically identical shoots from burned stumps.

The current tree has sprouted from that ancient root system. Most of the oldest plants in the world are, like the Jurupa Oak, clonal organisms.

"It's sort of a philosophical question," Jeffrey Ross-Ibarra, a professor of evolution and ecolog-



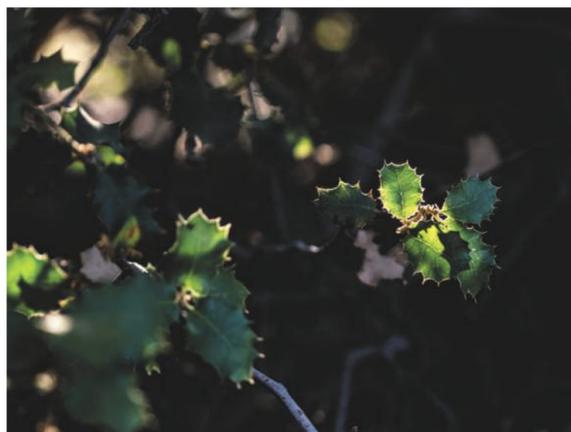
PHOTOS BY MELINA MARA/THE WASHINGTON POST

gy at the University of California at Davis, said of the difference between clonal trees and traditional trees. "If I have a tree in my backyard and I cut it down and a stem comes back up from it, I would generally think it's the same tree. But if you do it 10,000 times in a row, is it still the same tree?"

The oak was identified in the 1990s by local botanist Mitch Provan — but it wasn't until 2009 that researchers at UC-Davis, including Ross-Ibarra, calculated its immense age. It is now estimated to be the third- or fourth-oldest organism in the world: Its competitors include a quaking aspen in Utah, estimated at 80,000 years old, and a holly in Tasmania, estimated at 43,000 years old.

The tree could not have been found in a more unlikely environment. It clings to a rocky ridge overlooking warehouses, equestrian trails and the tracks of ATV riders. Jurupa Valley is also known for its environmental quality: The city is best known nationally for a set of polluted acid pits that catapulted it into the news in the 1980s.

The Jurupa Valley Planning Commission has not yet decided if the development can go forward. At a meeting in late June, dozens of locals showed up to comment



TOP: The Jurupa Oak, looking like a sprawling shrub on a rocky outcropping, is estimated to be 13,000 to 18,000 years old. Most of the tree is underground. ABOVE: Leaves of the Jurupa Oak, which has become part of a California debate over how to answer the state's need for housing while protecting its rich biodiversity.

on the development — more than half urged that it be rejected or modified. The city also received over 100 emails opposing the project.

"We have discovered a treasure on the world stage here in our humble city," said Jenny Iyer, a resident of Jurupa Valley. "Will one of the oldest living beings on

the planet die just because Jurupa Valley okays industrial and business parks next to it?"

Part of the concern is that the Jurupa Oak is growing far outside its normal zone. While the area around Jurupa Valley was peppered with Palmer's oaks around the last ice age, all of them are now gone — except for this one. Some-

how, the tree is surviving in conditions that should be too hot and too dry.

"It's already beyond its ecological extreme," Echols said. "It's the only one out here."

Local scientists and conservationists believe there may be a special microclimate or some kind of underground basin that is providing the tree with additional water. But the scientific analysis of the risks to the tree has not been released to the public — the Planning Commission, which has the authority over the project, says it cannot release the analysis because it would reveal the location of the tree. (The Jurupa Oak is considered a sacred site for Indigenous peoples, but locals know its location.)

Tim Krantz, the conservation director for the Wildlands Conservancy and a professor emeritus at the University of Redlands, believes that the tree is fed by groundwater trickling down from nearby hills. If those hills are covered with asphalt and concrete, he warns, that flow of groundwater will halt — potentially killing the tree.

The developer, Richland Communities, counters that the plan will protect the tree with a number of strategies. The developer has promised not to build within

200 feet of the tree and to keep construction equipment 259 feet away from the tree's edge. The company has also promised to give the land immediately around the tree to a nonprofit, along with an endowment of \$250,000 to protect it.

"Not approving the project does not protect the tree," Jeremy Krout, a representative for Richland Communities, said at the meeting. "If the project doesn't get approved, you won't have the protection; there won't be a responsible party to protect the tree."

Richland Communities did not respond to a request for comment.

But environmentalists say that a 200-foot buffer is not nearly enough to protect the oak. They argue that a light-industrial building near the oak could produce excessive vehicle traffic and an urban heat island of cement and asphalt that could harm the tree.

Jim Pechous, the principal planner of Jurupa Valley, said in an email that the city is looking into creating a larger buffer zone around the tree and plans to further investigate the oak's root system.

In the late June meeting, the planning commissioners appeared bewildered that they and their small city had been thrust into decision-making over one of the oldest organisms on the planet. They listened attentively to the environmentalists, who urged them to reject the development, and representatives of local plumbing and building unions, who urged them to allow the project to go forward.

"It's mind-boggling, it really is — that we have this treasure that is not being protected," Arleen Pruitt, chair pro tem of the Planning Commission, said at one point of the Jurupa Oak.

The commissioners ultimately voted to postpone the decision and are expected to reassess the development on July 24. They will then vote to approve the plan — sending it to the City Council for a vote — or reject it.

On a recent afternoon, the tree sat in 98-degree heat, looking out across a small residential neighborhood and, a little farther in the distance, lines and lines of white-roofed warehouses. Krantz, of the Wildlands Conservancy, pointed to small acorns growing on the oak and clusters of pollen.

"It represents endurance and perseverance," Krantz said of the oak. "It's survived fires and droughts and, ultimately, climate change. And yet here she is throughout all of that — very much like the hardscrabble people of Jurupa Valley."

He touched one of the tiny acorns. "Just trying to get by," he added.

Scientists believe they may have finally found a way to recycle clothing

Catchall technique that separates blended fabrics may be key to reuse

BY NICOLÁS RIVERO

Nearly all your clothes will wind up burned or in a landfill — but scientists are coming up with new ways to recycle those fabrics into new clothes or useful products.

A critical step, though, will be figuring out how to handle blended fabrics that combine different materials, mainly cotton and polyester, into one piece of cloth. Once the fibers are blended together, it's hard to separate one material from the other so that each can be recycled separately.

Researchers at the University of Delaware are proposing a new recycling technique that breaks down blended fabrics using chemicals and microwaves. The researchers say the process takes 15 minutes and can dissolve any blend of cotton, polyester, nylon and spandex into molecules that can be used to make new fabrics or products like dyes, electronics and tires.

Catchall recycling techniques like this one could be a last line of defense to keep clothing out of the dump, according to Tasha Lewis, an associate clinical professor in fashion and retail studies at Ohio State University. There are other solutions to fashion waste that are simpler and cheaper: People can buy secondhand clothing and make their wardrobes last longer. Companies can make garments more durable

and make them out of one material so they're easier to recycle. Worn-out textiles can be chopped up and used as insulation in buildings.

But when there are no other options, chemical recycling could save the day. "This would be the final stage for the leftovers that just have no other purpose," said Lewis.

The state of textile recycling

The need to recycle clothing is becoming more urgent along with the rise of fast fashion, the business model where retailers churn out cheap, flimsy clothes quickly to keep up with ever-changing fashion trends. The world now throws out 92 million tons of clothes a year and only about an eighth of it gets recycled, according to an analysis from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a nonprofit focused on recycling. The rest winds up in landfills or incinerators where it pollutes the air and water.

Most of the clothes that are recycled get "downcycled," meaning they're shredded into a less valuable material that's used for things like padding or insulation. Less than 1 percent of all garments get turned into a new piece of clothing, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

That rare form of recycling is key to many environmentalists' and fashion designers' vision for a future where most clothes are made from recycled materials and the same fibers can be used again and again in new garments.

"Ideally, if we recycled all textile waste, we would have enough materials forever and we wouldn't need to produce new materials," said Miriam Ribul, a



PHILIP FONG/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A customer peruses a secondhand shop in Tokyo's Harajuku district. Researchers hope a process using microwaves and chemical solvents could be a last line of defense to keep clothing out of landfills.

senior research fellow in Materials Circularity at the Royal College of Art in London.

Today, that happens in a small number of facilities that take old fabric and turn it into new fibers and yarns. Just as glass and metal can be melted down and remolded into new products, synthetic fabrics like polyester can be melted into plastic pellets and turned back into fibers. And just as paper can be churned into pulp and

rolled into new sheets, natural fibers like cotton can be shredded and spun into new yarns.

Most of these plants focus on just one type of material, such as cotton or polyester, and some struggle to find companies willing to buy their recycled threads, which are often lower quality than new fabrics. Renewcell, a Swedish start-up that opened a plant to turn old cotton into new rayon in 2022, filed for bankrupt-

cy in February.

What about blended fabrics?

The challenge is even harder for blended fabrics that have to be separated before they're recycled. "The fashion industry is not always transparent about what's in their clothes," said Erha Andini, the lead author of the University of Delaware study on recycling blended textiles. It's common for retailers to weave a little

spandex or nylon into modern garments to make them stretch and help them fit — but they don't always say so on the tag. Companies also rarely list the dyes and finishes they add to fabrics to make them wrinkle-resistant or waterproof.

To deal with complicated clothes with mysterious materials, Andini and her colleagues developed a chemical recycling process that strips fabrics down to their molecular studs. Using microwaves and chemical solvents, the researchers can break the bonds that hold synthetic fibers together, leaving behind the basic molecules used to make polyester, nylon and spandex, along with intact cotton fibers. The molecules can be turned back into fibers for clothing, or used to make other products such as seat belts and air bags.

Unlike with existing recycling methods, researchers can use this technique even if they don't know exactly what's in a piece of clothing. But they've only demonstrated it in a lab. They say it may take a decade or more for companies to turn the idea into a profitable business.

In the meantime, experts say, the fashion industry should also think about other ways to curb waste, such as making garments out of one material so that they're easier to recycle and making less clothing in the first place.

"We can't just recycle our way out of this issue," said Sophie Scanlon, a textiles specialist at WRAP, a British nonprofit focused on waste. "We really need to tackle the root issue of, why are we producing and consuming greater and greater quantities of clothing?"

ELECTION 2024

Harris boosts Biden, taps network of Black women at sorority conference

BY SABRINA RODRIGUEZ AND CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.

Vice President Harris, at a pivotal moment in President Biden's fight to save his candidacy, urged an influential group of Black women Tuesday to mobilize behind the Biden-Harris ticket but did not mention the uproar that has engulfed the president since his stumbling debate performance two weeks ago.

"We know when we organize, mountains move," Harris exhorted fellow members of the historically Black sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha gathered in Dallas. "When we mobilize, nations change. And when we vote, we make history."

She added, "Our nation is counting on the leaders in this room to guide us forward."

The 19,000 Black women in the audience, who frequently cheered Harris's words, represented a central pillar of Biden's political coalition, one he must retain to have any hope of reelection. In 2020, exit polls showed 90 percent of Black women voted for Biden, by far the highest of any one group of voters, although recent polls suggest a drop-off in his support among voters of color.

The group would also be critical to Harris's prospects should she mount a future presidential run — or should she replace Biden on the 2024 Democratic ticket, as some in the party want.

"For 116 years, the members of our sorority have been on the



NITASHIA JOHNSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Members of Alpha Kappa Alpha applaud Vice President Harris at the historically Black sorority's convention in Dallas on Tuesday. Harris is spending the summer attempting to energize voters.

front lines of the fight to realize the promise of America," Harris said, sporting a pink suit in a tribute to the sorority's pink-and-green colors. "This year, let us continue that work."

In the days since Biden stumbled over his words and often struggled to complete his sentences during his June 27 debate against presumptive Republican

nominee Donald Trump, a growing number of Democratic leaders have suggested the president should seriously consider whether to keep running for reelection — or end his candidacy and make way for another Democrat to become the nominee.

Biden has forcefully rejected that message, leaving Harris in a sensitive spot as she undertakes a

campaign swing this week to address core Democratic groups: Her chief mission is to bolster Biden, but it is hardly lost on her audience that she is also displaying her own political skills should she find herself heading the ticket.

Speaking before the nation's oldest Black sorority, Harris did not mention Biden's ongoing

struggles back in Washington, focusing her remarks instead on the administration's achievements and the stakes of the fight against Trump.

Harris, who graduated in 1986 from Howard University, has long leveraged her status as a member of AKA. She has participated in several events since taking office with the Divine Nine, the group of historically Black sororities and fraternities.

Later this month, she will meet in Indianapolis with members of Zeta Phi Beta, another historically Black sorority with a record of focusing on social justice.

In her remarks, Harris leaned into her familiarity with the audience, calling them her "sorors," or sisters. She thanked them for helping elect Biden as president and her as the first female vice president. And she gave a shout-out to fellow AKA, Shalanda Young, who serves as Biden's budget director.

Harris checked off work the administration has done to tackle health-care costs, lower maternal mortality rates, reduce student loan debt and remove medical debt from credit reports. And she focused on abortion rights, citing it as one of the freedoms currently under attack in the United States.

"All of us here are clear that while we have come a mighty long way, we have more work to do. Across our nation, we are witnessing a full-on assault on hard-

fought, hard-won freedoms and rights," she said, listing attacks on voting, LGBTQ+ and abortion rights.

The trip was part of what the White House has billed as a "Summer of Engagement" for the vice president. While Biden is back in Washington this week hosting the NATO summit, Harris has been on the road serving as a top cheerleader for Biden and his administration.

On Tuesday, she offered a strong defense of Biden, calling him a "fighter" at a campaign event in Las Vegas focused on Asian American, Hawaiian Native and Pacific Islander voters. On Thursday, Harris heads to Greensboro, N.C., her sixth trip to a state that Democrats are attempting to flip blue this election.

She spent last Saturday at the Essence Festival in New Orleans, speaking to a crowd of mostly Black women in a moderated conversation that focused heavily on the stakes of the election.

The choice of audiences is no accident. In 2020, Black voters' embrace of Biden catapulted him to the Democratic nomination and then the presidency, and ensuring those voters are still enthusiastically behind him in 2024 is a top task for his campaign.

Harris is central to that effort and has regularly been deployed an ambassador to energize key portions of the Democratic electorate, including Black, Latino, AAPI and younger voters.

U.S. sailor sought access to Biden's medical files

BY DAN LAMOTHE

A U.S. sailor has been disciplined by the Navy for attempting unsuccessfully to access President Biden's medical records without authorization, officials disclosed Tuesday amid ongoing scrutiny of the president's health and fitness for office.

The incident occurred in late February, well before Biden's halting performance during last month's presidential debate set

off a panic among Democrats, and it was not immediately clear whether the actions were politically motivated.

The sailor, who has not been identified publicly, is assigned to a Navy medical unit located at Fort Belvoir, Va., outside Washington, Cmdr. Tim Hawkins, a Navy spokesman, said in a statement. The sailor accessed the military's digital patient portal and searched for Biden's name "out of curiosity," but he ultimately

failed to access any records belonging to the president, Hawkins said.

"At no time was the President's personal information compromised," he added.

The case surfaced because a co-worker reported the sailor for violating medical privacy laws, Hawkins said, noting that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service concluded in April there was a breach, though "the record the sailor accessed was not the

electronic record of the president of the United States." The Navy did not disclose its findings at the time.

The sailor, described only as junior in rank, was punished administratively, said a U.S. defense official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the issue's sensitivity.

The case, first reported by CBS News, emerged days before Biden received a regularly scheduled physical at Walter Reed National

Military Medical Center in Maryland. The sailor's unit in Virginia had a separate mission to train sailors in medicine and has about 400 doctors, nurses and other personnel assigned to it.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Patrick Ryder, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters that the White House and senior Defense Department officials were notified about the situation in February.

The Navy's disclosure of the incident comes more than a year after news surfaced of another high-profile data security matter involving the military.

In that case, a junior member

of the Massachusetts Air National Guard accessed hundreds of highly classified documents without permission and uploaded images of them online. Jack Teixeira, 22, faces up to 16 years in prison after pleading guilty to willful retention and transmission of national defense information.

Teixeira remains in custody while awaiting sentencing this fall. The Air Force separately has sought to court-martial Teixeira on charges of obstructing justice and failing to obey orders. A commander overseeing the case is expected to disclose his intentions for that case soon.



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ELECTION 2024

MOORE FROM A1

and I have told him that Maryland is all-in for him.”

While many surrogates have stood by Biden as questions about the president's mental acuity threatened to undermine the Democratic ticket, Moore has been among the earliest and most forceful in setting himself on the front line of defense.

Moore has promised to go “anywhere and everywhere” to make the case for a Biden administration and given more than two dozen interviews supporting the president since the presidential debate last month. He has volunteered as both “a full-throated” advocate for Biden staying in the race and as an envoy to the disaffected Black voters crucial to a Democratic win.

“I don't do disloyalty,” Moore, 45, said in an interview with *The Washington Post*. “The president is our nation's leader, and the president is a fantastic partner for me.”

A Rhodes scholar and an Army veteran raised by a single, immigrant mother, Moore has just 18 months as a politician under his belt and his own moonshot policy goals.

He needs a federal partner to help keep his campaign promises that require an infusion of federal cash — among them, ending child poverty, delivering 100 percent clean energy and building a multibillion-dollar transit line in Baltimore to combat generations of disinvestment.

Back in February, Biden singled out Moore — who has also been an investment banker, a nonprofit chief and has published five books — as a rising force during a Black history month event at the White House, telling the crowd to “watch this guy.”

In returning that affection since the debate, Moore has become a test case in whether Biden could keep his promise to be a “bridge” to the next generation of Democratic leaders.

Moore told *The Post* that the unease he felt watching the debate was sufficiently soothed by his Oval Office meeting with Biden and Vice President Harris.

“I had real concerns,” he said. “People's concerns should not be underestimated. ... In addition to watching the president not have a good debate at all, you also saw what the alternative looks like. And the fact that Donald Trump thinks he had a good debate should be terrifying to people.”

Privately, Moore told his aides it was time for the governors to “mount up” and help Biden. The president had delivered on every promise he made to Moore — including critical assistance needed to reopen the Port of Baltimore after a container ship toppled the Francis Scott Key Bridge into the channel in March.

As Moore left the Oval Office, after watching the president talk and interact with people, he told his chief of staff, “He needs us, and I think he can do it.”

Publicly, Moore shared that the governors had a frank airing of their worries with Biden. “When you love someone, you tell the truth.”

Moore works to rally support for Biden



CALEB ALVARADO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore (D) campaigns for President Biden last month at the Milwaukee Black Coalition's cookout.

Moore is in a pivotal moment in his political trajectory, one that could define his prominence in the Democratic Party and potentially afford him a role at the Democratic National Convention, which has launched other prominent figures, including former president Barack Obama in 2004.

Regardless of who stays atop the ticket or what happens at the convention, Moore will spend his summer as he did in his six-stop visit to Wisconsin: campaigning for the Democratic nominee while burnishing his reputation as an inspiring speaker the party needs and connecting with Black voters.

As Moore waited to speak to the Kenosha Black Coalition, the local leader introducing him spun through his many titles: military man, father, entrepreneur. “Most of all, he looks like us, right?” Alderman Kenny Harper said, prompting the room to erupt in applause.

Moore rolled through the talking points from Biden advisers — insulin costs capped at \$35, Black wealth up by 60 percent — but also deployed his own. A Democratic president, he argued, was critical to his own dreams of dismantling systems that hold back Black families.

“I don't come from a political family,” Moore said. “I had to convince members of my family to vote for me. And it's not because my family and I aren't cool — my family and I are cool — it's just that I had to convince them to vote.”

“Say it again, brother,” Anthony Davis, 70, a retired Chrysler worker from Kenosha County said from the back.

“We need a surrogate that we can relate to, that a person of color can relate to,” Davis said later as his mother waited in the line to snap a photo with Moore. “Other people, they come to speak to you, and sometimes you don't always hear what they're saying.”

“Everything is a policy decision”

Moore's visit to Wisconsin was his highest-profile surrogacy bid yet, sent to help deploy the Biden campaign's strategy to persuade Black leaders to help turn out the vote amid polling showing that significantly fewer Black Americans plan to cast a ballot in 2024 than in 2020.

In a Washington Post-Schar School poll of swing-state voters in six key states, including Wisconsin, for example, nearly 3 out of 10 Black registered voters say they will “definitely” or “probably” vote for Trump. In a state often decided by a hairbreadth — Trump won in 2016 and Biden in 2020 — even a small shift among Black voters could determine the outcome.

To the task of empowering a network of Black activists, Moore brings skills suited to the motivational speaker circuit and instant credibility.

Wisconsin Democratic Party Chairman Ben Wikler described Moore as standing apart from other surrogates for his speaking skills and ability to talk to people

in any community. “The most dangerous thing in a democracy is a feeling of helplessness,” Wikler said. “And Gov. Moore's message to voters that they have enormous power and enormous opportunity to make a difference ... that message meets a deeply felt need for people.”

At a cookout in Milwaukee, home to 70 percent of the state's Black voters, an impromptu receiving line formed as soon as Moore's SUV pulled onto the grass at a city park.

because he hadn't written it.

At an earlier stop, he had happily signed three of his books for a 12-year-old boy who said his teacher had encouraged him to look at Moore as a role model. On the trail, Moore tells a deeply personal story from one of those books: When he was 3, his father died in front of him at home after being discharged from the emergency room with a treatable but deadly infection. In Wisconsin, he told a crowd how much Black men need health-care providers who understand “these unspoken realities of what it means to be a Black man in society.”

At the cookout, Moore took the mic to set the stage for what needed to be done.

“I just want to be clear, man, everything is a policy decision,” he said.

“The air that we breathe is a policy decision,” he said. “The water we drink is a policy decision. The schools our children attend is a policy decision. The transportation assets we have or don't have is a policy decision. The way that people are policed is a policy decision. The homes that people live in, those are policy decisions.”

“Everything comes back to: Who do we have representing us and who sees us? Sees us as assets and not as deficits? Sees us not as things that need to be fixed, but things that need to be celebrated?”

Biden and Harris, he said, saw their community's struggles and deserved the community's help in return.

“I don't do disloyalty. The president is our nation's leader, and the president is a fantastic partner for me.”

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore (D), on his support for President Biden's reelection bid

Ballot deadlines put pressure on Democrats eyeing other possible candidates

Party risks murky path if it wants to replace Biden after official nomination

BY COLBY ITKOWITZ, AMY GARDNER AND PATRICK MARLEY

When the most vulnerable House Democrats met this week on Capitol Hill, they were split on the core question of whether President Biden should stay in the race. But they agreed on at least one thing: A final decision needs to be made quickly to meet state ballot deadlines and avoid potential legal challenges by Republicans.

Should Biden bow out now — before he officially becomes the party's nominee — legal experts say replacing him on the ballot would be relatively straightforward. The process would become significantly more complex and legally murky, however, were he to drop out once he has been officially nominated.

Time is tight: Biden is slated to become the nominee through a virtual roll call of party delegates Aug. 5, two weeks before Democrats gather for their convention in Chicago on Aug. 19.

Democrats who have urged the president to stand aside want a resolution quickly so that they can avoid a procedural quagmire. Biden's backers, mean-

while, want the internal debate to end swiftly so that the party can resolidify behind him, with no ambiguity about his status.

The agreement on the need for expediency ends there.

“There is deep concern, but there is not consensus on what to do,” said one House Democrat who's running for reelection in one of 29 seats identified by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee as the most competitive this year.

Experts said Republicans could try to object to Biden's replacement in court. But if he drops out before the convention and delegates vote on someone else as the Democrats' presidential pick, they said, any challenge to placing that person on the ballot would immediately be dismissed. If Biden were to drop out after becoming the Democratic nominee, the legal landscape is a bit less clear.

The Heritage Foundation has offered a window into likely Republican efforts to challenge a replacement to Biden, naming three critical battleground states — Wisconsin, Georgia and Nevada — where they claim they could wage a legal battle. Some legal analysts say the strength of their case would depend on the timing and circumstances of Biden's exit. Others say there are no grounds for an outside group to intervene because the selection of a presidential nominee is up to the national parties.

The pressure of state ballot

deadlines and possible legal challenges adds yet another tricky factor into an already fraught political environment, with Democrats divided over whom they should back to face former president Donald Trump in the November election.

Ballot deadlines are typically a somewhat obscure realm of election law with little impact on a party's most weighty decisions. Now they matter, and Democratic lawmakers have expressed confusion about how the deadlines, which vary by state, play into any scenario in which Biden is replaced.

Rep. Andy Kim (D-N.J.), who is running for the U.S. Senate, told reporters on Capitol Hill on Tuesday that Democrats are trying to figure out “what are the actual deadlines” and said it's “hard to make a decision without fully understanding that.”

Former House speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), said in an appearance on MSNBC's “Morning Joe” on Wednesday morning that Democrats are urging the president to make a decision “because time is running short.” (Biden has insisted that he has already made that decision and that he is running.)

The group of front-line Democrats met several times this week, including Wednesday morning, to discuss the party's fraying support for Biden, according to three lawmakers who were in the room. Part of the discussion centered on the im-

portance of quickly establishing whether Biden is in or out — to avoid the chaos of an open convention but also to prevent Republicans from challenging the eventual nominee on state ballots.

“What happens when the GOP starts suing to keep people off the ballot?” one of the three representatives said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to be candid. “You know they will do that.”

Months before the president's disastrous debate performance, which set off a frenzy within the Democratic Party over whether he should step aside, the Heritage Foundation laid out in a memo how it would legally challenge Democrats in several key swing states if they tried to replace Biden on the ballot.

Mike Howell, executive director of the conservative think tank's Oversight Project, wrote in an April 2 memo that if Democrats tried to replace Biden, “there is the potential for pre-election litigation in some states that would make the process difficult and perhaps unsuccessful.”

Election experts say it's a nonissue right now because there is no official nominee to replace until delegates vote for one.

“Heritage's threatened litigation would be frivolous if a ticket is nominated at the convention,” said Adav Noti, executive director of the Campaign Legal Cen-

ter, a government watchdog group.

If the ticket is nominated or changed after the convention, Noti said, the legal situation “would depend on the date of the nomination and on the state[s] at issue, since each state has its own post-convention nomination deadline and procedures for modification.”

Howell noted in the memo that in some states, there are no specific laws about how to deal with a presidential candidate's withdrawal, writing that “this confusion may be its own source of litigation.”

Heritage points to a statute in Wisconsin law that a nominee can be replaced on ballots only if they die. Jeffrey Mandell, an election lawyer who has worked for Democrats in Wisconsin, said Biden would be difficult to remove from the ballot once he's nominated, in part because of a short time frame. Ballots will be printed in September and, under state law, must start to be mailed to overseas voters starting Sept. 19.

Mandell said it's hard to predict how the Wisconsin Supreme Court would react if Biden withdrew from the race after becoming the nominee.

“If either candidate has some kind of debilitating but not fatal incident, I think we can expect that the Wisconsin Supreme Court would be fairly flexible,” he said. If the switch were made for political reasons however, Man-

He tied his own fate to the administration's, spinning through his own accomplishments from his first 18 months in office and saying it would not have been possible without the Biden administration's support, including the reopening of the port, record-low unemployment and the 175,000 pardons he issued for marijuana convictions.

“I don't come from a family that is used to making the policies,” he said in Kenosha. “Frankly, I come from a family that's used to suffering the consequences of them.” The 8-to-1 racial wealth gap does not exist, he said, “because one group was working eight times harder.”

He told them he felt their skepticism, too.

“Honestly, cynicism will always be my companion, because I know our histories,” he said. “But we also have to be honest about this, too: It feels good to have an administration who actually wants to address the structural challenges instead of compounding them.”

“I'm going to spend these next months giving it all I've got,” he said. “Because our children deserve it.”

‘Next Barack Obama’

The next morning, at the end of the service at Milwaukee's Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church, Moore took the pulpit.

Moore said that while he came on behalf of the president, he stood before them to talk about what resided within the congregation.

“I'm not here to talk about the power of Joe Biden,” he boomed. “I'm here to talk about the power of us. And our power does not come from who sits in the White House.”

“My brother, my brother,” a church leader said from the front row.

Minutes later, Moore's team raced him across town to catch the last few hours of the service at Canaan Baptist Church. Moore, the grandson of a preacher who helped raise him, had taken notes in his personal Bible throughout both sermons and invoked the Book of Joshua. He told the faithful that their ancestors and their future needed them to put in the work before November's election.

“I'm here in Wisconsin ... because I'm talking to la-di-da-di everybody to say we need to make sure we get out there,” he said.

“We go out there and we work. Because everything that we hoped for, everything that we inherited and everything that we dream about is on the line. And we have got to make sure that our voices are heard, and that when history is written, that our fingerprints are all over it.”

Amid the “amens” and the “that's rights” rippling through the congregation, from the fourth pew Tommie Reed Green, 81, said aloud, “He seems to me the next Barack Obama. He does, he does.”

When the service ended, Reed Green snaked through the crowd and waited her turn to greet Moore. She whispered her Obama prediction in his ear.

Moore's broad smile widened further.

“God bless you,” he said.

dell said: “That's a lot more complicated.”

Heritage said that in Nevada, the party nominee must be set by June — but it may take a judge to resolve the question. The office of the Nevada Secretary of State Cisco Aguilar (D) published an administrative rule last year setting the deadline in September.

Heritage also cited Georgia as a battleground where the organization hopes to thwart an effort to replace Biden. The office of the Georgia secretary of state, however, said Heritage's argument misapplies state law. There is no legal ballot deadline because it's the purview of the national parties, not the state, to select their nominees. There is a practical deadline, however, as there is in every state, which is the date by which the ballots have to start being printed.

Election experts say that even if there is no legal path to keeping a Democratic nominee other than Biden off the ticket, conservatives are likely to pursue them anyway to sow confusion.

“Heritage understands that there is little legal ground for lawsuits on ballot access prior to the nomination,” said Craig Holman, a government affairs lobbyist at Public Citizen, a good-government advocacy group, “but no doubt will file lawsuits anyway in an effort to entangle the democratic process and harass whoever may be the Democratic Party nominee.”

ELECTION 2024

Pelosi urges decision on replacement, subtly casting doubt

PELOSI FROM A1

questions about whether he can beat Donald Trump and serve another term as president.

In a letter to Hill Democrats this week, Biden insisted he is running for reelection. But Pelosi, with subtle precision on morning television, said the president needed to make a “decision.” She was the most high-profile in a slew of Democrats to paint a picture of a president who is deep in thought about whether he should run, even though Biden and his camp contend that there is no other choice on the table.

And she left Hill Democrats mulling whether they might actually have an influence on the course Biden chooses to take with four months left until November.

According to those that have known and watched Pelosi over the past several administrations, she doesn’t operate in a vacuum and she is intentional in her language. Her timing was notable, coming a few days after the president released his letter and one day before a high-stakes Biden news conference, according to Democrats who have worked with and around the former speaker.

Pelosi, who remains in the House even after stepping down as speaker, is “always very deliberate about what she says,” a senior Democratic House aide said.

In the hours after she spoke, a New York member from a competitive district — Rep. Pat Ryan (D) — said he could no longer support Biden, the 12th Democratic House member by the end of the day to urge the president to step aside. New York’s lieutenant governor and former House member, Antonio Delgado, said it was time for a “new leader.” Otherwise, the most prominent voice calling for Biden to exit the race Wednesday was actor George Clooney. One Senate Democrat — Peter Welch (Vt.) — became the first senator to publicly call on Biden to step aside in an op-ed for The Washington Post on Wednesday.



ALLISON ROBERT/THE WASHINGTON POST

Former House speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) spoke on “Morning Joe” on Wednesday, just minutes before a group of Democrats held their second meeting to discuss President Biden’s candidacy.

day evening.

“We cannot unsee President Biden’s disastrous debate performance. We cannot ignore or dismiss the valid questions raised since that night,” Welch said.

Pelosi’s TV interview came just minutes before a group of swing-district Democrats was set to hold a second meeting in as many days with House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries (N.Y.) to discuss Biden’s candidacy. The most vulnerable House members have only grown more fearful in recent days that Biden will be a drag on their races as new public and internal campaign polling has painted a grim electoral picture for Democrats, depressing their ability to recapture the chamber. Democrats only need to win four seats to reclaim the House majority, but all of their most vulnerable members must win.

Pelosi’s loyalty is to the House and she will act in what is in the House’s best interest, two senior House Democratic aides noted.

Congressional Democrats have been mainly privately wringing their hands about Biden’s debate performance two weeks ago in which he seemed at times lost or unable to finish his sentences. But many have hesitated to publicly urge him to abandon his campaign, waiting — they say — for more polling data, for the NATO summit in Washington this week to end and to see how Biden performs in a Thursday evening news conference.

Hill leaders — including Jeffries and Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (N.Y.) — have stated that they are behind Biden but said little else despite widespread fear among their rank-and-file that the president could gravely jeopardize their chances of recapturing the House majority and hanging on to the Senate in November.

“I agree with Nancy. She’s stating the obvious,” Welch said earlier Wednesday. “President Biden has made it clear that he’s all in,

but the evidence continues to come in about how an uphill battle is turning into an up-mountain battle.”

Until Wednesday morning, Pelosi hadn’t said much either. But when she did speak, Washington took note of the potential implications.

The former speaker is one of a small circle of Democratic power brokers that can effectively pressure the president, multiple current and former Hill aides say. One chief of staff to a Democratic House member said the California Democrat — who’s 84 and stepped down from House leadership in 2023 — “has the most pull” among party elders who could ultimately deliver a grim message to a defiant Biden given the pair’s decades-long relationship.

“There’s only one person who has the gravitas and balls to say anything to Biden and it’s Pelosi,” a former Hill aide who is close with congressional leadership said.

Pelosi’s remarks were not coordinated with Jeffries, three senior Democratic aides said. Leadership is still in listening mode, these aides said, as the House Democratic caucus remain deeply split about how to address Biden’s fitness for office.

Jeffries has offered little direction to his members on approaching the Biden question. Privately, he has not told members whether to hold the line for the president, according to five people familiar with his deliberations who — like some others interviewed for this article — spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations. Vulnerable Democrats and other members who have spoken with Jeffries in recent days said they feel he understands their concerns.

In two separate meetings over the last 24 hours, Jeffries told members that he would soon relay members deep concerns to the president, according to three people familiar with the remarks. It’s unclear if a call has been scheduled yet.

But multiple aides said Jeffries was boxed in when many Congressional Black Caucus members came out in support of Biden this week. Jeffries is a member of the CBC and is extremely deferential to the groups’ leaders. Furthermore, there’s doubt among leadership that the president would accept their counsel should they share concerns about the campaign. A senior House Democratic aide complained that it wasn’t even clear if any members of House leadership could reach Biden if they tried.

But there is a resounding belief among Hill Democrats that Biden might listen to Pelosi.

“I will tell you that she is probably the most savvy politician walking the face of the planet,” said Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Tex.), who this week praised Biden for being one of the most effective presidents in U.S. history. “So I will leave it there.”

Biden, 81, and Pelosi, 84, have a shared Catholic faith and have spent more than three decades

working together on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy matters, including the 1994 crime bill that included an assault weapons ban.

Biden’s final major legislative accomplishment as a senator, the July 2008 passage of legislation to battle AIDS in Africa, was a hallmark issue that Pelosi shepherded through the House during her first stint as speaker. As vice president, Biden often got tasked with selling compromises with congressional Republicans to Pelosi’s caucus that left many Democrats with a sour taste — but garnered respect from Pelosi.

Once Democrats took full control of Washington in January 2021, Biden and Pelosi, along with Schumer, worked closely on an ambitious policy agenda including the largest-ever investment in fighting climate change. Their partnership grew so strong that throughout late 2021 and 2022, longtime diplomatic observers — from Foggy Bottom to Rome — took note of Biden’s delay in nominating a U.S. ambassador to Italy. That prompted deep speculation that whenever she stepped down as speaker, the president wanted to send the Italian Catholic to Rome as a capstone.

She denied those rumors, and after deciding to leave leadership, Pelosi made the unusual decision to stay in the House and rejoin the rank-and-file, albeit with the continued gravitas and an honorific title: “Speaker Emerita.”

Until last week, perhaps no Democrat had been a more effective defender of Biden’s age and capabilities than Pelosi, regularly turning any question on the topic into both an attack on Trump and a strong defense of Biden.

“Joe Biden has vision. He has knowledge. He has a strategic thinker. This is a very sharp president in terms of his public presentation,” she told CNN’s Anderson Cooper in February. “If he makes a slip of the tongue here or there, what’s the deal?”

Liz Goodwin and Theodor Meyer contributed to this report.

Party leaders say they need evidence that Biden can win

BIDEN FROM A1

in helping workers than Joe Biden.”

Senior campaign staff have started to take a more pessimistic view of Biden’s chances, even as they continue to fan out in a full-court blitz to push the campaign forward and reassure allies of the president’s potential to rebound.

“Overwhelmingly a majority of senior campaign staff are despondent and don’t see a path,” said a Democratic strategist familiar with the conversations. A second person familiar with the discussions did not dispute the description.

“We can either worry or we can work, and this team is doing the work that wins elections,” Biden campaign spokesman Kevin Munoz said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Democrats say the defections are likely to increase in coming days, with lawmakers and donors privately signaling that, by the end of the week, they may publicly call for Biden to drop out. They argue they do not want to embarrass Biden during the ongoing NATO summit in Washington while also giving him time to decide on his own to exit the race.

On Wednesday, Sen. Peter Welch of Vermont became the first Democratic senator to call on Biden to drop out, writing in a Washington Post op-ed that he should do so “for the good of the country” because of the danger posed by Trump. In addition, Rep. Pat Ryan (D-N.Y.), one of the party’s most vulnerable members; Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.); and Antonio Delgado, the lieutenant governor of New York who formerly represented a swing district in Congress, also called on Biden to step aside.

At the first presidential debate with Trump on June 27, Biden was unable to complete sentences, often spoke haltingly and, at times, seemed confused about what question he was trying to answer. Democrats panicked over the performance, raising questions about his ability to serve another four years as president and renewing questions about

the 81-year-old’s mental acuity.

Biden and his campaign continue to publicly maintain that he will not leave the race and that he is positioned to beat Trump in an election that will take place in 116 days. The Biden campaign told Democratic senators Wednesday that campaign chair Jen O’Malley Dillon, senior campaign adviser Mike Donilon and White House adviser Steve Ricchetti will meet Thursday for a briefing on the path forward. The Biden campaign said it conducted polling immediately after the debate that found no significant movement in the battleground states for Biden.

A Democratic senator said that, if the campaign team tells senators that there has been little to no deterioration in the president’s position, “I don’t think anybody will believe it.” He added that senators will be looking for “convincing evidence that they can turn this thing around.”

Kate Bedingfield, the deputy campaign manager on Biden’s 2020 campaign and former White House communications director, gave voice to private frustrations in the party that the campaign has not yet offered an empirical case for Biden recovering from his debate setback and then gaining enough momentum to win.

“If they have data that supports the path to victory that they see, they should put it out there now and help people who badly want to beat Trump rally around it,” Bedingfield wrote on social media. “People want to see the path.”

Ron Klain, a longtime Biden adviser and former White House chief of staff, said there was unanimity among Biden’s team that he remains the best candidate to defeat Trump. “He wins in 2024 as he did in 2020 — because his personal values and character ultimately prevail against Trump,” Klain wrote in a text message.

Democrats have been privately sketching out possible scenarios and the timing of them, should Biden decide to leave the race, including Biden possibly endorsing the nomination of Vice President Harris. One Democratic strategist said time is of the es-



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Tourists watch through a fence at the White House on July 3 as governors speak with the press after a meeting with President Biden.

sence: “Every iteration of this, earlier is better,” avoiding a “mad scramble” near or at the Democratic National Convention in August in Chicago.

Biden announced in a letter to Democratic allies Monday that he was “firmly committed to staying in this race, to running this race to the end, and to beating Donald Trump.” But former House speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) appeared Wednesday on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” — a show that Biden is known to watch regularly — where she described Biden’s continued candidacy as an open question.

“It’s up to the president to decide if he is going to run,” said Pelosi, who remains a member of the House since relinquishing the speakership. “We’re all encouraging him to make that decision. Because time is running short.”

House Democratic concerns are anchored in polling from before the debate that showed Biden already trailing Trump in districts that he won comfortably in 2020, with approval ratings in the low 40s, according to a person who has seen the data. In both House and Senate polls, down-ballot Democrats continue to outperform Biden in ballot tests.

An AARP poll released Tuesday — which was conducted by polling firms that work for the Biden and Trump campaigns — showed Biden trailing Trump in Wisconsin by six percentage points in a five-way contest that included third-party candidates. Biden beat Trump in Wisconsin by less than a percentage point in 2020. Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) maintained a lead of three points over her Republican opponent, the businessman Eric Hovde, in the AARP poll.

“He is just a drag everywhere,” said another Democrat working on campaigns this cycle who has seen private polling across the country.

The campaign has since started another round of polling this week, though the results have not come back, said people familiar with the operation. Biden also announced he will sit down for an interview Monday with NBC News anchor Lester Holt in Austin, to be shown during the first night of the Republican nominating convention.

National public polls showed Trump with a slight lead before the debate — a sharp contrast to the lead of about four points Biden enjoyed over Trump at the

same point in the 2020 campaign. Since the debate, national polls have shown a 2.5-point average shift in Trump’s direction, according to a Washington Post average of polling.

Democrats are particularly concerned about Biden’s diminished status compared with the 2020 campaign. At this point in that cycle, he polled nine points ahead of Trump in the RealClearPolitics average of polls. Biden won the national popular vote by 4.5 points that November. Trump now leads the same average by more than three points.

Some Democrats have grown concerned in recent days about the pace of fundraising for Biden and the independent groups supporting his campaign, as high-dollar bundlers for the president have shown reluctance to work their networks or have refused to follow through with donations. The campaign was bringing in more than \$3 million a day after the debate, according to people familiar with the internal numbers. Donations have since dropped off, and campaign advisers are awaiting the Republican convention next week to see if enthusiasm returns.

The uncertainty among high-

dollar donors about giving to independent groups has made it “hard to balance the checkbook,” said one fundraiser involved in the effort. “I think a lot of the large-dollar donors are going to move their funding to the House and the Senate. If Biden is going to stay in, he has got to pray that the small-dollar donors come through.”

On Wednesday, George Clooney, the Academy Award-winning actor and longtime Democratic donor, said Biden should drop out of the race. Clooney — who co-hosted a fundraiser for Biden last month in Los Angeles — said the president “wasn’t even the Joe Biden of 2020” at that event.

“This isn’t only my opinion; this is the opinion of every senator and Congress member and governor that I’ve spoken with in private,” Clooney wrote in the New York Times. “Every single one, irrespective of what he or she is saying publicly.”

He continued: “The dam has broken. We can put our heads in the sand and pray for a miracle in November, or we can speak the truth.”

Lauren Kaori Gurley and Liz Goodwin contributed reporting.

Fears of Trump's return at NATO

NATO FROM A1

word “irreversible.”

Four nations also announced Wednesday that donated F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine will be operational later this summer. And alliance leaders called out China for being a “decisive enabler” of Russia’s war in Ukraine, its toughest language yet toward Beijing.

But for all the effort to strengthen the alliance, Trump’s shadow was casting a pall over Washington’s convention center, where the summit is being held. European leaders quietly wonder whether this is a goodbye to a U.S. president who hews to a transatlantic agenda — a bipartisan constant of U.S. foreign policy from World War II until Trump’s arrival in the White House in 2017.

“If we elect him a second time, then I think that’s, from the Europeans’ perspective, extraordinarily telling about our direction of travel in the United States,” said Andrea Kendall-Taylor, director of the transatlantic security program at the Center for a New American Security think tank. “And so it is Trump-proofing for the most immediate four years, but there is a growing worry that the United States will be less committed to Europe over the longer term.”

Few European policymakers say they believe that Trump would formally pull the United States from NATO. Congress recently passed legislation that binds the country to the alliance and would require a two-thirds vote in the Senate to withdraw.

But many fear Trump would bring a far more transactional approach to the alliance, and some take seriously his vow that he would look at whether they are meeting their defense spending commitments before deciding whether to come to their aid if they are attacked. How to handle Trump is dominating social conversations among NATO policymakers in Washington, along with the related obsession of whether Biden will drop his reelection effort.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on Wednesday downplayed concerns about a second Trump presidency.

“The main criticism from former president Trump, but also from other U.S. presidents, has not primarily been against NATO, it has been against NATO allies not investing enough in NATO — and that has changed,” he told reporters. “The clear message has had an impact, because now allies are really stepping up.”

Asked whether European leaders are talking about Trump behind closed doors, Norwegian



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during the alliance's summit at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in D.C. on Wednesday.

SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre told The Washington Post in an interview that “you will not believe me if I said no.”

While in Washington, many leaders are taking the opportunity to have quiet conversations on the side with potential Trump administration foreign policy officials. Keith Kellogg, the retired general who was then-Vice President Mike Pence’s national security adviser and continues to advise Trump, said last month that he had received 165 requests for briefings from foreign officials since November, and that he had granted 100 of them. Kellogg noted that he doesn’t speak in an official capacity for Trump or the Trump campaign.

Many international policymakers — including Ukrainian leaders, who have the most to lose — have been hedging their bets against the possibility that Trump could return to office. That was notable Tuesday in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s choice of venue to deliver a speech: the Reagan Institute, to a room of Republican luminaries and European diplomats.

Though he was careful not to comment directly about the U.S. election, Zelensky urged Biden to allow Ukraine to use U.S. long-range weaponry to strike military bases on Russian territory “and not to wait for November or any other event.”

Asked afterward by Fox News anchor Bret Baier how closely he was watching the U.S. election, he said, “I think sometimes closer

than you, Bret,” to laughter from the crowd.

Ukrainian leaders said that they hoped to float above the tumultuous U.S. presidential race, mindful of their role in Trump’s first impeachment, in 2019. As president, Trump had delayed defense aid to Ukraine while pressing for evidence of Biden’s alleged corruption in Kyiv.

“We don’t have to fit every political process. We have to make sure we secure our survival from political processes,” Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Olha Stefanishyna said in an interview.

NATO policymakers have been deep in discussions for months about how to manage Trump’s revival. After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the Biden administration resisted a direct role for NATO in the provision of military aid to Kyiv, hoping to avoid Russian perceptions that the alliance was directly in battle with Moscow.

That reluctance has faded as Ukraine’s early heroics have been tempered by recent Russian battlefield gains. Meanwhile, Trump has surged in the polls and European concerns have grown. NATO policymakers agreed in the lead-up to the summit to establish a new NATO command that will take on many of the coordination roles that the Pentagon had provided.

Policymakers quietly acknowledge that Trump-proofing the alliance can only go so far — not least because Trump is not the only leader who has questioned NATO

policy toward Ukraine and Russia. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico have also backed similar policies.

Some leaders say a Trump presidency could be fine for NATO, especially if it pushes lagging European countries to spend more on their defense.

“What I say to Europeans all the time is: ‘Stop freaking out about Trump. You’ve done this before, you did this for four years, and guess what? It actually wasn’t that bad for Europe,’” said Rachel Rizzo, a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Europe Center, in a briefing with reporters. “There was some tough rhetoric and tough language that ruffled feathers certainly. But the policies that Trump put in place toward Europe were not damaging toward NATO.”

That spend-more effort has been endorsed by right-wing leaders in Europe who share many of Trump’s migration-skeptic policies and yet are also pro-Ukraine, such as Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Polish President Andrzej Duda.

Trump and Duda “are friends. They understand their values. They understand credibility when it comes to the security obligations also,” said Jacek Siewiera, the head of Duda’s National Security Bureau.

Italy’s ambassador to the United States, Mariangela Zappia, said NATO’s core interests can withstand elections.

“I believe the NATO summit

will be in fact a confirmation of how democratic systems can choose different paths but in the end stand together on principles: in this case, that borders cannot be changed through aggression,” she said.

Pro-NATO policymakers hope to manage splintering policy visions under the leadership of the incoming secretary general, Mark Rutte, who as a long-serving Dutch prime minister met repeatedly with Trump and became known for his tact in managing sometimes tense interactions.

That would put him in the tradition of Stoltenberg, who earned plaudits during the Trump era for finding ways to work with him.

“He made a very conscious decision to not pick a fight with the U.S. president, not to challenge him publicly or privately, and never to be caught talking about him,” said Camille Grand, a former NATO assistant secretary general who is now a distinguished policy fellow with the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Oana Lungescu, NATO’s spokesperson between 2010 and 2023 and now a distinguished fellow at the London-based Royal United Services Institute, said Stoltenberg’s team workshoped a single, easy-to-read graph that showed increases in European defense spending. The alliance also looked for ways to credit Trump for pushing allies to spend more.

“The figures were real — it’s about how you shape it and how you use it [to show] that this is achieving results, that NATO is a

win,” she said.

Rutte, 57, spent 14 years wrangling political coalitions as prime minister of the Netherlands and is seen as a skilled and savvy diplomat with a frank, pragmatic style. Those who have worked with him say he is deeply committed to the transatlantic relationship and will do whatever it takes to protect it.

“He deeply believes in the power and strength of U.S.-European cooperation as a force to project Western values on the global stage, and he will speak up for that,” said a senior European official who has worked closely with him for years, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive issues.

In a now-famous 2018 interaction in the Oval Office, Rutte pointedly pushed back when Trump, delivering off-the-cuff remarks about trade, suggested it would be “positive” if the U.S. and Europe failed to reach a deal.

“No,” Rutte said, as Trump continued to speak. “It’s not positive,” Rutte continued, smiling. “We have to work something out.”

Trump shook his hand and moved on.

“Europe needs to step up regardless of the outcome of the U.S. election,” Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström said in an interview. “We also have to take a greater responsibility for Ukraine, because Ukraine is in our backyard.”

Ellen Nakashima and Karen DeYoung contributed to this report.

Biden’s aging and demeanor face close scrutiny as leaders fret at summit

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

The 31 NATO leaders who descended on Washington this week came expecting to talk about defending Ukraine, preventing cyberattacks and ensuring the future of the 75-year alliance. And while those discussions did take place Wednesday, an entirely different question was also a big topic of conversation among the heads of state: What is going to happen to President Biden?

The long-planned summit is overlapping with a moment of extraordinary political peril for Biden, as Democrats debate whether he should remain their presidential nominee since a shaky debate performance on June 27 prompted questions about his age, ability to campaign against Republican Donald Trump and capacity to serve another four-year term.

On Wednesday, the second of the summit’s three days, the leaders debated those questions among themselves, anxiously asking their American counterparts what to make of the unfolding political crisis and closely parsing Biden’s public and private interactions to determine whether he seems up to another brutal campaign and presidential term, according to several people familiar with leaders’ reactions, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss private dynamics.

Since arriving in Washington on Tuesday and having their opening conversations with

Biden, NATO’s leaders have been comparing notes on their impressions of the president, one European official familiar with the interactions said, in an effort to build as complete a portrait as possible of the most important alliance leader.

Two people who have spoken with the NATO leaders and dignitaries said most of them have four key questions, ones that largely track what many Americans are asking: Is Biden going to drop out? If he does, will Vice President Harris replace him at the top of the ticket? What does Harris mean for NATO? And what should they do to prepare for a possible Trump presidency?

The former president has threatened to shred the alliance and said he would allow Russia to do “whatever the hell they want” to any NATO country that doesn’t spend enough on defense. But despite the underlying fears of Trump’s return, which many of the leaders dread, the mood of the NATO summit has been upbeat in many ways, said Ian Bremmer, president of the Eurasia Group, a consulting firm.

Leaders are encouraged by the fact that Ukraine is in a better position in its two-year-plus war with Russia than it was three months ago, even if deep concerns remain about its long-term prospects. And Biden welcomed two new countries, Finland and Sweden, into NATO, and touted the fact that the number of allies spending at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense has increased from nine in 2020 to 23

now.

Still, “there’s no question that what’s happening today with Biden — and with questions about American democracy and commitment to the transatlantic alliance — is making everyone very nervous,” Bremmer said.

White House officials, mindful that divisions over Ukraine broke into the open at last year’s NATO summit in Lithuania, have spent the past 12 months trying to manage Kyiv’s expectations about its prospects for membership in the alliance. They have emphasized that this year’s gathering would be largely an opportunity to celebrate 75 years of NATO, potentially delivering a foreign policy boost to Biden ahead of the election.

But Biden’s debate performance two weeks ago transformed the energy at the gathering, sucking the air out of the festivities and focusing attention on the president’s ability to do his job, according to several participants.

Any NATO summit features an intense focus on the U.S. president. He typically speaks first in the leaders’ closed-door meetings, a recognition of the key role Washington plays in propping up the alliance. This year, the United States is set to spend \$968 billion on defense, according to NATO figures — nearly double the total expenditure of the other 31 member nations.

But with Biden’s abilities in question, that casual attention has transformed into detailed, anxious analysis of his every gesture and utterance. Some leaders

have been undertaking an effort to bolster NATO against the possibility that Trump would return and undermine it from within. Even under Biden, some strong supporters of Kyiv complain that the alliance has not been aggressive enough about supporting Ukraine and moving it more quickly toward NATO membership.

Biden’s most important test will come Thursday, when he is set to hold a rare news conference that Democrats say will be critical to showing that he has the energy and mental agility to campaign against Trump. European leaders will closely watch that news conference to try to determine whether his debate performance was a bad night, as Biden has argued, or a sign of a bigger problem that could make it more challenging to defeat Trump.

As early as Tuesday, leaders began exchanging notes on their interactions with Biden and how much he appears to have aged. One person familiar with some of the conversations said leaders felt that Biden was showing no improvement over his appearance at the Group of Seven summit in Italy last month, when European officials came away alarmed at how much more frail he seemed.

Several European leaders have known Biden for many years — some dating back to his days as vice president more than 10 years ago — and that has made his recent aging especially stark, the person familiar with the conversations said.

Discussions of Biden’s condition and political future have dominated the chatter on the sidelines of the summit. At a reception at the British ambassador’s grand residence Tuesday, American officials maintained studious poker faces when the topic of Biden’s future came up. European ministers and security officials, meanwhile, pumped American acquaintances for insider details about the thinking at the White House, the mechanics of nominating a different Democratic candidate and potential replacements, according to people familiar with the conversations, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

At a Tuesday reception with all 32 NATO leaders, Biden’s mannerisms were similar to those in a welcome speech he had delivered earlier that evening, as he recognized many of his counterparts without prompting and engaged in fluid if brief encounters, one European official said. The president mingled with other leaders alone, without his or their aides present, the official said.

Still, foreign leaders, like many American observers, are now viewing some of Biden’s behaviors, which earlier they might have dismissed as inconsequential, through a new lens.

During Biden’s opening speech Tuesday, many in the audience were watching closely as the president put the presidential medal of freedom around the neck of outgoing NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, according to

three people who were present. One person said some in the audience held their breath, anxious to see if Biden could complete the task. The ceremony went off without a hitch.

Biden then spoke passionately about the renewed strength of the alliance, which has largely remained unified in the face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Biden did not mention Trump by name, but he stressed that a majority of Americans support NATO and spoke of the danger of a world without the alliance.

“It’s good that we’re stronger than ever, because this moment in history calls for our collective strength,” Biden said in his speech. “The American people understand what would happen if there was no NATO — another war in Europe, American troops fighting and dying, dictators spreading chaos.”

At the summit’s main meeting Wednesday, Biden delivered prepared remarks of about three minutes without difficulty, then appeared attentive throughout the hours of interventions by the other 31 leaders, four senior officials who took part said.

After the meeting, Biden hosted Britain’s new prime minister, Keir Starmer, at the White House.

Early in the day, Biden stopped by a meeting of AFL-CIO leaders, a friendly group that has reaffirmed its support for the president. “I’ve never been more optimistic about America’s chances,” Biden told the labor group. “Not because of me, but because of what we’re doing together.”

THE WORLD

Hezbollah's arsenal looms large as fears rise of all-out war

Lebanese militant group has guided and unguided rockets, antitank artillery, and ballistic and anti-ship missiles, as well as drones equipped with explosives

BY MOHAMAD EL CHAMAA AND SAMUEL GRANADOS

After nine months of cross-border conflict with Hezbollah, Israel says it is preparing for a full-scale war in Lebanon, warning the time for diplomacy is running out.

Hezbollah, a militia and political party that grew out of Lebanon's civil war to become one of the strongest non-state actors in the Middle East, has been preparing for this moment since 2006, when Israeli forces last invaded the country.

It has received large shipments of rockets and drones from Iran, its principal patron, and has more recently begun to produce its own weapons. The group also boasts air defense capabilities, which most militias don't have.

The group's arsenal includes guided and unguided rockets, antitank artillery, and ballistic and anti-ship missiles, as well as explosives-laden drones — portending a complex, multi-front conflict that could reach far into Israeli territory.

Analysts estimate Hezbollah has between 130,000 and 150,000 rockets and missiles, more than four times as many as its ally Hamas was believed to have stockpiled before the war in Gaza. And the Lebanese group says it commands more than 100,000 soldiers, well over double the high-end estimates of Hamas's prewar fighting force.

Most of Hezbollah's weapons are lower-grade, unguided munitions, which could threaten Israel's aerial defense systems if unleashed in large numbers. Even more concerning for Israel are precision munitions the group has said it possesses.

Hezbollah keeps a tight lid on its arsenal, leaving weapons experts to guess about the full extent of its capabilities. Much of what is publicly known comes from statements by the group and its leader, Hasan Nasrallah, who says his fighters have only used "a portion of our weapons" in escalating attacks on northern Israel since Oct. 8.

Israel's military has retaliated with intense strikes on Lebanon, mostly in the south, using fighter jets, tanks, Hermes drones and white phosphorus munitions.

Tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced on both sides of the border.

At least 94 civilians and more than 300 Hezbollah fighters have been killed in Israeli strikes in Lebanon, according to figures compiled by The Washington Post. The attacks have caused \$1.5 billion in damage and have destroyed about 1,700 buildings, the Lebanese government estimates.

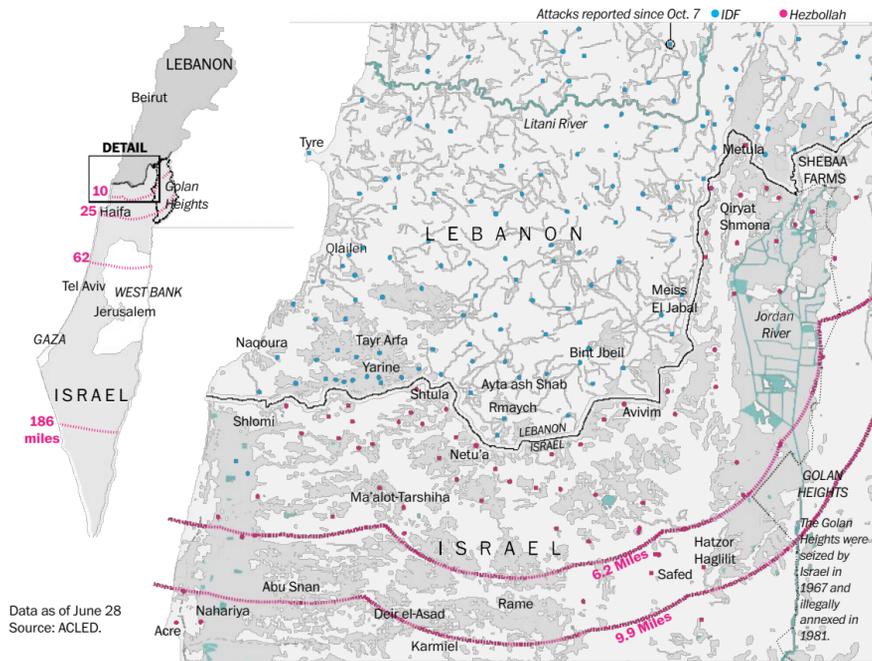
Israeli officials say Hezbollah attacks have killed 20 soldiers and 12 civilians. They have also damaged hundreds of homes and ignited fires that burned more than 40,000 acres.

Rockets and missiles

Hezbollah first started hitting northern Israel a day after Hamas-led militants stormed the country on Oct. 7, killing about 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages. The group has said it will continue fighting until Israel agrees to a cease-fire in Gaza.

Hezbollah has used different short-range missiles and rockets, at first targeting tanks and other technical equipment near the border before progressing to attacks on military barracks and bases.

On Nov. 11, Nasrallah revealed



Some of Hezbollah's known missiles and rockets

	Type	Range (miles)	Explosive (lbs.)
FALAQ-1	Unguided rocket	6.2 - 6.8	110
FALAQ-2	Unguided rocket	6.2 - 6.8	265
ALMAS	Antitank missile	2.5 - 9.9	Not available
KATYUSHA	Artillery rocket	2.5 - 24.8	22 - 44
RAAD	Artillery rocket	37.2 - 43.4	110
BURKAN	Heavy rocket	Up to 6.2	661 - 1,102
358	Loitering munition	Up to 62	Not available
SAYYAD-2C	Surface-to-air missile	40 - 62	441
C-802	Antiship missile	74.5	364
FATEH-110	Short-range ballistic missile	155.3 - 186.4	992 - 1,102

Note: Illustrations are based in low resolution images and are for illustrative purposes only. Not to scale.

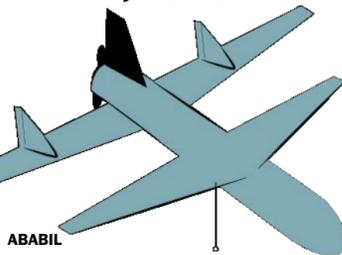
Sources: Hezbollah official statements, CSIS, Army Recognition, Cat-Uxo, ODIN, Alma, DJI

Hezbollah was using Burkan rockets. An improvised rocket-assisted munition that can be easily assembled, the Burkan has become a "signature weapon of Iran-supported groups in the region," according to Fabian Hinz, a

defense and military analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

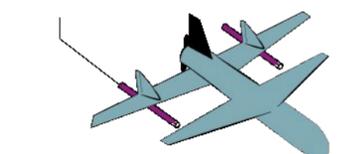
The Alma Research and Education Center, an Israeli think tank, says the weapon can be fired from a ground launcher and can cause

Some of the drones believed to be used by Hezbollah

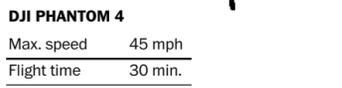


ABABIL
Range 74.5 miles
Max. speed 190 mph
Max. ceiling 9,800 ft.
It can be equipped with 88 pounds of explosives.

Retrofitting
A video published by Hezbollah on May 16 indicated that two S5 rockets were fired from pipes fitted on the UAV's wings.



DJI MAVIC PRO 2
Distance 11.2 miles
Max. speed 44.7 mph
Flight time 31 min.
Max ceiling 19,685 ft.



DJI PHANTOM 4
Max. speed 45 mph
Flight time 30 min.
Max. ceiling 19,685 ft.



HUDHud-1
Flight time 1.5 hours

"extensive destruction" up to 500 feet from the point of impact.

Gen. Mounir Shehadeh, a former Lebanese government coordinator to the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, said the Burkan was first used and tested by

Hezbollah in Syria — where Nasrallah deployed fighters to prop up President Bashar al-Assad during the country's civil war.

Nasrallah also revealed in November that the group was using Katyusha rockets. Originally made by the Soviet Union and copied by Iran, they can travel 12 to 24 miles and are fired in a series.

Although they are unguided, Hinz says Hezbollah "can fire lots of them because they are cheap and, until certain ranges, they work."

In an interview with Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV in early July, an artillery officer, identified as Hajj Muhammad Ali, speaking with his face blurred and voice altered, said the group is capable of firing 100 Katyushas at a time from truck-mounted launchers.

Iranian-made Raad rockets were used by Hezbollah in a deadly attack on the Israeli port city of Haifa during the 2006 war, but have not been unleashed yet during this round of fighting.

In January, after Israel killed top commander Wissam al-Tawil, Hezbollah started showcasing more sophisticated rockets, including the Iranian-made Falaq model. This was followed by camera-equipped Almas weapons, guided antitank missiles that can pierce heavy armor.

Larger guided ballistic missiles, like the Fateh 110, present a greater threat, with a range of up to 185 miles, potentially putting Tel Aviv, and even Jerusalem, in the crosshairs. Similar missiles were used by Iran in an unprecedented — but well-telegraphed — aerial attack against Israel earlier this year, giving the Israeli military time to intercept them. It's unclear what impact they might have if launched from across the border in Lebanon, especially in large numbers.

Nasrallah said in 2018 that Hezbollah possesses precision-guided munitions (PGMs), but the group has never tested or showcased them in public. More recently, in 2022, he claimed Hezbollah has the ability to "transform our rockets ... into precision missiles" with the help of Iranian experts.

Analysts say he could be referring to something like the Spice kits the United States provides to Israel to retrofit "dumb bombs" into precision munitions.

PGMs are more effective because they "they're equipped with active seekers," said Shaan Shaikh, a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and deputy director of its Missile Defense Project.

"Nasrallah has talked about it, the [Israel Defense Forces] has raised concerns. ... But it's hard to say anything definitive without proof," he added.

Hezbollah is secretive about its arsenal, Hinz said. It took 13 years for the group to reveal that it used a C-802 missile to sink an Israeli ship in 2006.

Anti-ship missiles could also be used to hit offshore oil rigs, specifically in Israel's Leviathan gas field — a target the group alluded to in a video last month.

Drones

Hezbollah has a large fleet of drones at its disposal, varying in size, shape and capability.

According to official statements, the group first started using explosives-laden drones on Nov. 2 in an attack on an Israeli army post in the Golan Heights, footage of which was later released on its Telegram account.

The IDF said two soldiers were injured.

Hinz says the type of drone used in that and other attacks was most likely modeled after the Iranian Ababil-T drone, which the Alma Research and Education Center says can travel about 75 miles with nearly 90 pounds of explosives.

In mid-May, after Israeli forces invaded Rafah, in southern Gaza, Hezbollah unleashed a more advanced version that can fire two rockets and explode upon impact. The unmanned aerial vehicle was first used in a May 16 attack on an Israeli army garrison near the border, which injured three soldiers, the IDF said.

Although Iran is Hezbollah's main arms supplier, the group has become more self-reliant in recent years. "Today, we in Lebanon, and for a long time, have begun manufacturing drones," Nasrallah said in 2022, a claim he reiterated in June.

Hezbollah has also used commercial drones for reconnaissance, and to test for gaps in Israel's aerial defenses. In late June, a drone flew undetected over Haifa for hours, recording footage of strategic sites. Alma believes it was an Iranian-made Hudhud-1 UAV; Hezbollah has not confirmed the model.

Air defenses

It is unusual for non-state actors like Hezbollah to have air defense capabilities, signaling the extent of the group's preparedness for war.

Hezbollah has used surface-to-air munitions, most notably the Iranian-made 358 antiaircraft missile, to shoot down Israeli drones, according to Hinz.

On at least two occasions, the group also claims to have used more sophisticated munitions — likely the Iranian Sayyad-2C, Hinz said, a radar-guided missile that can reach targets at nearly 90,000 feet — against Israeli fighter jets, forcing them to retreat.

Such capabilities could present a unique, and unusual, challenge to Israel's air superiority. "Hezbollah is far better equipped than Hamas," Shaikh said.

Volume over quality

In early June, in response to the killing of a senior commander, Hezbollah lobbed 150 rockets and 30 drones in a single barrage, the largest such attack on Israel from the north. Last week, after another Israeli airstrike on a Hezbollah commander, the group upped the ante again, firing more than 200 rockets.

In an all-out war, these so-called "saturation attacks" — in which hundreds of small rockets are launched at the same time — could overwhelm Israel's Iron Dome.

"They've already spent a lot of Iron Dome interceptors during the war in Gaza," Hinz said. "How many do they have left?"

The Fateh ballistic missiles could also be unleashed in salvos, experts say, raising other critical questions about Israel's level of preparation.

"How effective are David's Sling and Arrow interceptors against these missiles?" Shaikh wondered, referring to Israel's defense systems for medium- and long-range missiles. "Can the IDF detect, track and fire on these missiles while they're being prepped for launch?"

"There's a lot we don't know."

Lior Soroka in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.

DIGEST

IRAQ Wife of ISIS leader sentenced to death

An Iraqi court issued a death sentence Wednesday against one of the wives of the late Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, saying she was complicit in crimes committed against Yazidi women captured by the militant group.

The ruling comes just short of 10 years since the Islamic State attacked the Yazidi religious minority in the Sinjar region of northern Iraq in early August 2014. The militants killed and captured thousands of people, including women and girls who were subjected to human trafficking and sexual abuse. The United Nations said the campaign against the Yazidis amounted to genocide.

A statement by Iraq's judicial council said the Karkh Criminal Court sentenced the woman for "detaining Yazidi women in her home" and facilitating their kidnapping by Islamic State fighters. It said the ruling was issued in accordance with Iraq's anti-terrorism law and its "Yazidi survivors law."

The statement did not name the defendant, but two court officials identified her as Asma Mohammed, who was arrested in 2018 in Turkey. An Iraqi security official said Wednesday that the woman was handed over to Iraqi authorities last year.

In June 2014, Baghdadi declared an Islamic State caliphate in large parts of Iraq and Syria. In October 2019, he died in a U.S. raid in Syria, a major blow to the group, which has lost the areas it controlled.

— Associated Press

PAKISTAN Stay is extended for some Afghan refugees

Pakistan announced Wednesday that it is extending the stay of 1.45 million Afghan refugees who legally live in the country, a day after a visit by the U.N. refugee agency.

Afghan refugees with proper documentation will be able to remain in Pakistan until June 30, 2025, according to a statement issued by the office of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

On Tuesday, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi had urged Pakistan to extend the validity of the refugees' registration cards — critical identity documents.

The previous stay extension expired June 30, causing wide uncertainty and fear that the

Afghans could be repatriated.

The decision comes amid a widely criticized anti-migrant crackdown that began last year and targets anyone without valid documentation regardless of nationality, according to Pakistani authorities, forcing an estimated 600,000 Afghans to return home. After wrapping up his three-day visit, Grandi issued a statement expressing his appreciation that the repatriation of undocumented persons had been suspended.

His statement stunned Pakistani officials, who say no such understanding was given to him. On Wednesday, a spokeswoman for Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan was still in place and is being "implemented in an orderly and phased manner."

— Associated Press

A mass trial of dissidents in the United Arab Emirates

sentenced 43 people to life in prison on Wednesday while several other defendants received long prison terms in a case widely criticized by activists abroad. The sentences issued by the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal came in a case described by the UAE government as involving the Muslim Brotherhood, a pan-Islamic organization declared a terrorist group by the Emirates. Activists, however, decried the case as simply targeting dissidents.

The wife of an imprisoned Belarusian Nobel Peace laureate

said Wednesday that the country's authorities are depriving her husband of medicine as his health worsens. Pro-democracy activist Ales Bialiatski, 61, is serving a 10-year

sentence. He suffers from several serious chronic illnesses that have worsened in his three years behind bars, his family says. They have been trying to supply him with medicine, but authorities refuse to pass it on to him, said his wife, Natalia Pinchuk. Bialiatski was detained after mass protests against the 2020 reelection of President Alexander Lukashenko.

Twelve schoolchildren and their driver

were killed in South Africa on Wednesday when their minibus overturned and caught fire on a road in Gauteng province, officials said. The accident took place a day after schools reopened following the winter holidays. Seven children were injured in accident. Reports said a small truck slammed into the back of the minibus.

— From news services

Russia recruits online for sabotage in Europe, officials say

BY SOUAD MEKHENNET,
CATHERINE BELTON,
EMILY RAUHALA
AND SHANE HARRIS

MUNICH — When a man was spotted taking photos in October of a U.S. military garrison in a Bavarian town where Ukrainian troops are trained to operate the M1 Abrams tank, it triggered an investigation that led to the first evidence Russia was planning sabotage attacks in Germany, security officials said.

The suspect, a German citizen born in Russia, was discussing over an encrypted messaging app potential targets in Germany — including the U.S. facility in the town of Grafenwoehr — with an individual with ties to Russia's military intelligence service, according to six Western security officials.

Dieter Schmidt, 39, and an alleged co-conspirator were charged with espionage in April — the first arrests in Germany of alleged saboteurs working for Moscow. Europe has in the months since been grappling with a rapid increase in Moscow-led sabotage attacks or plots as Russia turns its focus to increasing the cost of Western support for Ukraine.

"Russia is fighting the West in the West, on Western territory," said a senior NATO official who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive material. "Our focus is really sharpening on this."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said "virtually every ally" at a NATO meeting in Prague in May raised the issue of "the Kremlin ... intensifying its hybrid attacks against front-line states, NATO members, setting fire and sabotaging supply warehouses, disregarding sea borders and demarcations in the Baltics, mounting more and more cyberattacks, continuing to spread disinformation."

The question of how far Moscow will escalate its efforts and how the West should respond will consume part of this week's NATO summit in Washington. Western officials say the Russian operations they detected seem designed to stay below the threshold of an open armed attack while stirring public unease, and their numbers are growing.

In Britain, four men were charged in April with carrying out an arson attack on a London warehouse containing aid for Ukraine; authorities said the attack was paid for by Russian intelligence. At the beginning of May, a fire broke out at the Diehl weapons factory just outside Berlin — and investigators said they are examining a possible link to Russian intelligence. In Poland, also in May, an arson attack burned down a mall outside Warsaw, and soon after Polish police arrested nine men, alleging they were part of a Russian ring involved in



SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES



CHRISTOF STACHE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

TOP: A view of the BASF chemical factory on the Rhine River in Ludwigshafen, Germany. ABOVE: U.S. soldiers in July 2022 at the U.S. Army military training base in Grafenwoehr. Europe has been grappling with an increase in Moscow-led sabotage attacks.

"beatings, arson and attempted arson," including an arson attack at a paint factory in Wroclaw and at an Ikea store in Lithuania.

In June, French police arrested a Russian-Ukrainian dual national for allegedly planning a violent act after materials intended to build explosive devices were found at his hotel room outside Paris following an apparently accidental explosion in his room. Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said a Latin American man accused of an attempted arson attack on a bus depot in Prague last month was "probably" financed and hired by Russian operatives.

A trove of Kremlin documents

obtained by a European intelligence service and reviewed by The Washington Post illustrate the breadth of Russia's efforts to identify potential recruits.

The documents show that in July 2023, Kremlin political strategists studied the Facebook profiles of more than 1,200 people they believed were workers at two major German plants — Aurubis and BASF in Ludwigshafen — to identify employees who could be manipulated into stirring unrest.

The strategists drew up excel spreadsheets analyzing the profiles of every worker, highlighting posts that demonstrated the employees' anti-government, anti-

immigration or anti-Ukrainian views.

At the BASF chemical plant, special attention was paid to the workers' attitudes toward the closure of several facilities at the plant in spring 2023 because of soaring production costs, including natural gas price hikes, which led to the loss of 2,600 jobs. At the Aurubis metals plant, the strategists noted anti-immigrant views in the posts of some of the workers, one of the documents shows.

"We can concentrate on inciting ethnic hatred," one of the strategists wrote. "Or on organizing strikes over social benefits."

German officials said they were unaware of any incidents at BASF or Aurubis that could be tied to Russia, but added they took the Kremlin activities very seriously and believe they illustrate how Moscow is using social media to recruit operatives.

Daniela Rechenberger, a spokesperson for BASF, declined to discuss any workers but said the company is "constantly strengthening its capabilities to prevent, detect and respond to security risks."

Christoph Tesch, a spokesperson for Aurubis, said, "We have no evidence of this — nor are we aware of any social unrest in the company."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told The Post that the allegations of Russian sabotage activity were "no more than a stoking of Russophobic hysteria."

"All these suppositions and allegations are not based on anything," he said, adding that the authenticity of what was claimed was "more than doubtful."

The expulsion of hundreds of suspected Russian intelligence officers serving under official cover as diplomats immediately after Russia's invasion of Ukraine was aimed at curbing Moscow's ability to conduct covert operations. But increasingly, officials said, Moscow is working through proxies, including those it recruits online.

"The way that we tried to react was the way that we would have acted during the Cold War. But it is not the way that Russia operates right now," said Gabrielius Landsbergis, Lithuania's foreign minister, in an interview. "Social media alone provides a lot of opportunities to find people who would assist them in their activities. So you might not need to even have a handler in NATO countries if you can do it online."

While operating through social media presents a greater risk of detection, Moscow seems willing to cast an indiscriminate net in its search for allies. Communications through encrypted apps and a seemingly random target set add to the challenges in uncovering Russian operations, officials said.

"It is extremely decentralized," Landsbergis said. "It could be refugees, people who are down on their luck. It could be criminals, basically, anybody who thinks

that earning a couple thousand euros [committing sabotage for Russia] is a good idea and maybe the risk is not too high."

Russia may also believe outsourcing such operations offers it a degree of deniability while still maximizing the potential for creating chaos, officials said. "They do what is possible," one senior European security official said.

One Russian academic with close ties to senior Russian diplomats insisted it was not possible to connect Moscow to all of the incidents cited by Western security officials. "But if this conflict continues, then each side will turn more and more to such distorted methods of battle," he added.

Schmidt, the man arrested for casing the U.S. military facility in Germany, had posted on Facebook about his exploits fighting with Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine between 2014 and 2016. His deployment appears to be a successful case of identifying potential ideological allies, German security officials said. Law enforcement officials said they are still investigating whether Schmidt received any financial compensation for his efforts.

Schmidt, who has both German and Russian citizenship and moved to Germany as a teenager, was also tasked with finding others within the German-Russian community in Bayreuth, his hometown in Bavaria, who could assist with the sabotage mission, investigators said.

One such recruit was Alexander Jungblut, another Russian-born German, who was arrested in April alongside Schmidt and also charged with espionage.

"Jungblut mainly did internet research and supported Schmidt," a German security official said, including gathering information on an American company with branches in Bavaria.

Attorneys for Schmidt and Jungblut did not respond to requests for comment.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in June that alliance defense ministers had agreed to increased intelligence exchange, enhanced protection of critical infrastructure and further restrictions on Russian intelligence operatives to curb Moscow's operations.

But Lithuania's Landsbergis said a much greater effort was required. "It doesn't look from our perspective that Russia is specifically avoiding casualties," Landsbergis said. "It is just a coincidence there haven't been any yet. We will need to have a reaction. ... When Russia is escalating into our territory, the best way to react is to allow Ukraine to escalate back."

Belton reported from London and Rauhala from Brussels. Cate Brown in Washington and Ellen Francis in Brussels contributed to this report.

Russia issues arrest warrant for Yulia Navalnaya, widow of Putin's rival

BY MARY ILYUSHINA
AND NATALIA ABBAKUMOVA

In a display of defiance by Russia's largely obliterated political opposition, Yulia Navalnaya, the wife of the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, has called for President Vladimir Putin to be held accountable for her husband's death, and lawyers for jailed Putin critic Vladimir Kara-Murza demanded that he be released from prison because of his failing health.

A Russian court on Tuesday ordered the arrest of Navalnaya — an unlikely prospect given that she no longer lives in Russia and has not returned to the country since her husband died suddenly in an Arctic prison in February.

Navalnaya has accused Putin personally of murdering her husband and repeated that charge in responding to her arrest order.

"When you write about this, please do not forget to write the

main thing: Vladimir Putin is a murderer and a war criminal," Navalnaya posted on X. "His place is in prison, and not somewhere in The Hague, in a cozy cell with a TV, but in Russia — in the same colony and the same 2-by-3-meter cell in which he killed Alexei," she added.



Yulia Navalnaya

The Kremlin has denied that Putin had any role in Navalnaya's death and Russian authorities issued a death certificate that cited natural causes.

Meanwhile, lawyers for Kara-Murza, a prominent critic of Putin and Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for The Washington Post who is serving a 25-year jail sentence for treason, said on Wednesday they had finally been able to

visit him after six days in which he could not be reached following his transfer to a prison hospital.

The lawyers called for Kara-Murza to be released from prison in light of his precarious health.

Navalnaya is unlikely to ever end up in a Russia jail. But the decision to issue the arrest warrant on the same day that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was visiting Moscow for a state visit sent a loud message to Putin's critics, including in Washington.

The arrest order accused Navalnaya of participating in an "extremist" group — her husband's political and anti-corruption organization — and it demonstrated the Kremlin's continuing focus on Navalny, who had become Putin's nemesis and most formidable opponent, even months after his death at age 47.

Navalny in 2020 survived a poisoning attack carried out by Russian agents using an internation-

ally banned chemical weapon, but was arrested upon his return to Russia in January 2021, following his recovery in a Berlin hospital. He was held mostly in punitive isolation cells as the authorities added new charges and criminal cases against him. Ultimately, he was transferred to the Polar Wolf prison colony near the Arctic Circle, where he died in February.

Navalnaya had been her husband's confidante and closest adviser for years but kept a low public profile, publicly stating that she was focused on their two children. But she stepped dramatically into the spotlight mere hours after the news of her husband's death, giving a surprise speech to world leaders gathered at the Munich Security Conference.

"I want Putin and everyone around him, Putin's friends, his government, to know that they will bear responsibility for what they have done to our country, to

my family and to my husband. And this day will come very soon," she said.

Days later, she released a video message urging Navalny's supporters not to give up in the struggle against Putin's authoritarian rule in hopes of maintaining the momentum of Navalny's movement. She said she would take up the mantle as leader of that effort.

A statement from the Basman court in Moscow did not specify the full nature of charges but they appeared to be linked to a 2021 ruling that declared three organizations set up by her husband to be "extremist," including the Anti-Corruption Foundation, which published multiple investigations into the illicit wealth and corrupt schemes of members of Putin's close circle.

Since Navalny's funeral in March, which his widow was not able to attend, Navalnaya has met with multiple world leaders, in-

cluding Biden. In July, she was elected chair of the U.S.-based Human Rights Foundation, a nonprofit organization that promotes human rights worldwide.

The lawyers for Kara-Murza said that Russian authorities prevented them from visiting him in a hospital where he had been taken. Kara-Murza, who suffers from health complications following two poisonings, is imprisoned in the Siberian city of Omsk, more than 1,300 miles from Moscow.

One of his lawyers, Vadim Prokhorov, called again for Kara-Murza's release from the prison colony because of his precarious medical condition.

In one of Kara-Murza's most recent letters from prison, he wrote to a friend: "To me, as a historian, the present time in general reminds me very much of the 'gloomy seven years' of the end of Nicholas I's reign. The darkest time."

Moscow Times, leading English newspaper, deemed 'undesirable' in Russia

BY MARY ILYUSHINA

Russia has designated the Moscow Times, a leading English-language media outlet focused on covering Russia, an "undesirable organization," effectively banning its operations within the country and exposing anyone collaborating with it to potential criminal charges.

"A decision has been taken to declare the activities of The Moscow Times, a foreign nongovernmental organization, undesirable on the territory of the Russian

Federation," Russia's prosecutor general's office said in a statement Monday.

It accused the outlet of "discrediting the decisions of the leadership of the Russian Federation in both foreign and domestic policy."

Russian authorities have used the "undesirable" label to force independent media and civic organizations critical of the Kremlin from the country. Some of the strongest Russian investigative projects, such as Proekt, the Insider and Important Stories, have been similarly labeled in recent

years, which severely limited their ability to report inside the country and exposed reporters and potentially their interview subjects to legal risks.

The "undesirable" classification forces organizations to cease operations in Russia and puts Russians who work for, fund or collaborate with them at risk of potential prosecution, with jail terms of up to five years.

The Moscow Times, which publishes in English and Russian, is the alma mater of many accomplished correspondents who cover

Russia, including Evan Gershkovich, the Wall Street Journal correspondent jailed in Russia on espionage charges the United States has dismissed as fabricated, and Ellen Barry, who went on to become a Pulitzer Prize-winning Moscow bureau chief in the early 2010s.

The paper was established by Dutch publisher Derk Sauer in 1992, making it the first Western daily to be published in the country.

The paper moved its office to Amsterdam in 2022 after Russia

passed a package of laws restricting coverage of the invasion of Ukraine. A year later, the Russian Justice Ministry designated it as a "foreign agent" — usually the first step taken by the authorities to drive an organization out of the country.

Access to the paper's website has been previously restricted in Russia, with authorities citing "systematic publication of socially significant false information aimed at discrediting the activities of state authorities of our country in conducting a special military operation," a Kremlin eu-

phemism for the war.

"This designation comes as no surprise — it was clear that our journalism, which is telling the world the truth about Russia and its war on Ukraine, makes the Kremlin uncomfortable," Samantha Berkhead, an editor with the Moscow Times, told The Washington Post in a statement.

"Our jobs are going to become more difficult. Anyone in Russia who interacts with us in any way will now be at risk of criminal prosecution. But we refuse to be silenced," she added.



PHOTOS BY CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Internet is 'last hope' for women living under the Taliban

AFGHANISTAN FROM A1

Beheshta, 24. "But nothing can replace real freedom." Like other women interviewed, she spoke on the condition that only her first name be used out of concern that her comments could draw the ire of government officials.

The Taliban would be hard-pressed to ban social media platforms outright, and adopting Chinese-style controls over the internet would be expensive. Though the regime has banned TikTok for "un-Islamic content," the Taliban is itself a heavy user of platforms such as YouTube and X, and government officials communicate via WhatsApp.

"Of course we want filters that reflect our Islamic values, but it's expensive — and right now money is tight," Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief government spokesman, said in an interview in the southern city of Kandahar. He added that the regime wants to stop users from "wasting their time."

Hedayatullah Hedayat, a deputy information minister, said, "One day, we will have our own platforms."

Finding a safe space

When the Taliban captured Kabul in August 2021, Efat, then 18, had just graduated from high school and been accepted into the psychology department at Kabul University. Her family wanted to flee the country but was deterred by the chaos at Kabul's airport.

In the years since, she said, the internet has been a lifeline for her. Efat starts most of her days with fitness routines, watching workout videos on YouTube. During the day, she browses the internet, chats with former classmates and sells her paintings — she has made \$200 so far — on an Instagram page she manages with her sister.

With women banned from public parks, Efat primarily finds inspiration for her paintings online. Her latest work shows a tiger. "Women can be just as powerful as them," she said.

When the sun sets, Efat scrolls through her Instagram feed, where other artists post paintings of crying girls and of the huge Buddha statues in Bamian province that were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. And she spends time on TikTok, eluding the ban by using VPNs, which encrypt online traffic and reroute it around the government's internet filters.

"Without the internet, we'd all be shells of ourselves," she said. "Half of my life now happens online."

Many girls use the internet late in the evening and at night, when their friends are also online. When there is nobody to chat with, some turn to artificial intelligence.

Standing in a dimly lit basement shopping mall where she sells women's clothing, Sediqa, 23, said her new best friend is Gipi, a messaging bot that acts like a friend or language tutor. During long hours spent alone behind her shop counter, Sediqa often turns to the AI bot to chat. "It's like a friend that's always there for you," she said. Another benefit, she said, is that her AI friend never makes fun of her.

"It feels like a safe space," Sediqa said.

Earning and learning online

Eager to boost their household finances, some women have turned to cryptocurrency apps. Heela, 27, said she became a daily user of a crypto mining app after colleagues at work encouraged her.

Every 24 hours, she presses a button on an application called Pi Network and then lets her phone engage in crypto mining in the background for the rest of the day. (This process adds online transactions to a digital ledger called a blockchain and can create value.) The application is popular in Afghanistan because it works on ordinary mobile phones and is free, apart from the cost of the electricity it consumes.

But Pi Network's monetary value is unproven because its

currency, Pi, is not officially listed on major exchanges, where it could be traded for other cryptocurrencies or sold for U.S. dollars. Heela said she has yet to make money with it.

But for many Afghan girls, it's just one more bet at a time when almost anything can feel like a gamble. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the practice is widespread, especially in Kabul.

Sadia, 27, earns money by selling dresses online. But she said she increasingly struggles to find models who let themselves be photographed. When she posts photos of models wearing her dresses, the online criticism is often immediate. In an apparent warning that she is being watched, she said, male critics add her WhatsApp account to groups that promote how to become a devout Muslim.

Digital businesses such as art sales and delivery services are largely tolerated by the government. The number of female-run online businesses in the country remains limited. While the United Nations Development Pro-

gram says that efforts to expand digital payment systems show early signs of promise, their use is still rare.

Most of the women and girls interviewed in Kabul said they had signed up for at least one online education course since the Taliban took power.

Twice a week, Faryal, 22, sits in front of her smartphone and connects to the digital classroom where she teaches two courses, on media rights and criminal law, to dozens of female Afghan students. Such online classes are held on Google Meet and run by Afghan volunteers, often living abroad.

Faryal says the courses are an escape from boredom and resignation. "But there's something about eye contact that's difficult to replace," she said.

The Taliban government has not explicitly banned online educational courses and could struggle to enforce such an order, given that many providers are headquartered abroad. But teachers and students worry that they might still be at risk.

ABOVE: Women and girls display their artworks at a business fair in Kabul on May 13. Many Afghan girls turned to art after they were forced to leave secondary school because of a Taliban ban.

BELOW: Kabul resident Sajia, covering her face with her phone to protect her identity, saw many of her classmates drop out of an online English course over concerns of a crackdown by the Taliban.

When authorities earlier this year began to detain women for failing to properly cover their hair, rumors spread that police were checking all phones for evidence of participation in online classes. For weeks, Faryal said, she did not step outside with her phone.

Sajia, 23, who takes an English course online, said half of her class recently dropped out over concerns of a crackdown. "I don't think they'll return," said Sajia, who decided to continue participating. "It's so sad."

Fears for the future

The government has signaled it plans to step up scrutiny of internet use. Anyone who buys a SIM card for a cellphone can no longer remain anonymous and must provide an identity card and the contact details of five family members.

Anayatullah Alokozay, spokesman for the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, said efforts to gather more data on Afghan internet users are meant to prevent abuse and fraud. But the changes to SIM card purchases have triggered widespread concerns about government surveillance.

In reality, the Taliban's capabilities on this front still appear to be limited. Alokozay said Silicon Valley technology companies refuse to communicate with Afghan government officials. He said his ministry has repeatedly urged U.S. social media platforms to cooperate with Taliban government requests to take down content, such as those that impersonate other accounts, but without success. Even worse, Taliban officials say, the government's own social media accounts keep being deplatformed.

Aria, 20, said she worries about the day the Taliban cracks down on online activity. "If the Taliban restricts the internet, we won't have a choice but to flee for good."

Lutfullah Qasimyar in Islamabad, Pakistan, contributed to this report.



U.K. police find man wanted in suspected crossbow attack that killed three

BY ANIKA ARORA SETH

British police said Wednesday that they had found the man wanted in a suspected crossbow attack that left three women dead at a home in Bushey, Hertfordshire, northwest of London.

Kyle Clifford, 26, was found by police in the Enfield area of north London, according to a statement from Hertfordshire police. No shots were fired by police, the statement said, but Clifford was

receiving medical treatment after being found with injuries.

Police had named Clifford earlier Wednesday in connection with a triple killing the evening before. In an earlier statement, Hertfordshire police said officers were called to a home in Bushey just before 7 p.m. Tuesday and found the women seriously injured. All three died at the scene.

The BBC named the victims as Carol Hunt, 61, Hannah Hunt, 28, and Louise Hunt, 25. They were

the wife and daughters of John Hunt, who works for the BBC 5 Live radio station as a horse racing commentator.

"At this stage, we believe the suspect was known to the victims," Hertfordshire police said Wednesday evening.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, who took office last week after the Labour Party's election victory, is considering tougher crossbow laws and will assess the findings of a Home Office review carried

out this year, British news outlets reported.

The previous government had considered tightening the laws involving crossbows after would-be assassin Jaswant Singh Chail tried to break into Windsor Castle and kill Queen Elizabeth II with such a weapon on Christmas morning in 2021.

Britain does not have a registration system or licensing requirement for ownership of a crossbow, though it is illegal for anyone

younger than 18 to possess one.

In February, the Conservative government's Home Office launched an eight-week review to consider implementing a licensing system and tighter restrictions on buying and selling crossbows, similar to regulations for firearms.

The office completed the review in April, but action was apparently stalled by the recent elections.

In a post Wednesday on X, Coo-

per called the killings "shocking" and said she was being kept "fully updated" on the investigation.

John Hunt's fellow sports journalists and other figures from the racing world took to social media to express their condolences for the Hunt family.

"Impossible to comprehend the pain," ITV racing commentator Matt Chapman wrote on X. "Just know we are all here for you John. We love you pal — racing loves you."

ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

IDF orders Palestinian civilians to evacuate Gaza City

BY MIRIAM BERGER,
ADELA SULIMAN,
BRYAN PIETSCH
AND HAJAR HARB

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military issued a sweeping directive for all Palestinians to leave Gaza City on Wednesday, calling the area a “dangerous combat zone” as it ramped up operations in the enclave’s largest urban center.

The Israel Defense Forces dropped leaflets over the city — the largest in the Gaza Strip — urging civilians to flee south along two designated routes. The warning, which the military characterized as an “evacuation recommendation,” came just days after the IDF announced a new offensive in the region, causing fear and panic among the hundreds of thousands of people still living in northern Gaza, including Gaza City, according to United Nations estimates.

“Israel’s instruction for people to leave Gaza city will only fuel mass suffering for Palestinian families,” the U.N. humanitarian affairs office said in a statement Wednesday.

The World Food Program also warned that the “unpredictable and volatile situation” in Gaza City was limiting its operations, just weeks after the world’s leading body on food crises said a high risk of famine persists across the territory.

The vast majority of Gaza’s roughly 2.3 million people are already displaced, many of them multiple times, and the areas Israel has marked as “safe zones” are already desperately overcrowded, leaving little room for new arrivals. The leaflets released over Gaza on Wednesday told residents that they could move “quickly and without inspection” this time, signaling they would not be required to pass through the Netzarim checkpoint that divides the enclave and where the IDF has frequently detained Palestinian men.

“We categorically refuse to leave our house,” 39-year-old Anhar Sakik, a resident of Gaza City,



Palestinians carry their belongings on Sunday after being ordered to evacuate their neighborhoods in the eastern part of Gaza City.

DAWOUD ABU ALKAS/REUTERS

said in a phone interview Wednesday.

Sakik said she is staying in a family home near the headquarters of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) with 35 relatives. Israel said on Monday that intelligence indicated the presence of Hamas infrastructure, operatives and weapons at the agency’s headquarters, which was evacuated in October.

“We are surrounded under a barrage of artillery shells,” Sakik said. But, she added, “we experienced displacement and we know the extent of the suffering dis-

placed people have experienced and are still experiencing in the south. We will not leave at all because we don’t know where is safe.”

The Hamas-run Interior Ministry issued a statement Wednesday advising people to ignore the evacuation order and instead “move to a place close to your area of residence” if in danger. Local journalists reported Wednesday afternoon that they saw only a trickle of families fleeing along the route south.

“People realize that death will follow them everywhere,” Mahmoud Basal, a spokesman for

Gaza’s civil defense force, said by phone.

The IDF originally withdrew from the city in January but has since returned for more targeted raids, as Hamas fighters have regrouped in areas with fewer Israeli troops present.

The group’s military wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, released a video on social media Wednesday showing its fighters detonating explosives under Israeli bulldozers and firing rockets at soldiers in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood of Gaza City.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society said Wednesday on X, for-

merly Twitter, that its emergency services could not reach the sick and wounded.

“Operation room teams are receiving dozens of humanitarian distress calls from Gaza City, but our ambulance teams are unable to reach them due to the danger of the targeted areas and the intensity of the bombardment,” it said in the statement.

Sakik said her elderly mother is ill and her children “live in a state of fear.”

Her 8-year-old son, Zaid, won’t leave her side, she said, adding, “He tells me that at least if we are killed, I will be in your arms.”

Around 6:30 p.m. local time, Sakik sent a message saying there was heavy bombardment nearby — then communication was cut.

Here’s what else to know

Israel sent a delegation to Doha on Wednesday to participate in cease-fire talks, according to an Israeli official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel has “eliminated or injured” 60 percent of Hamas’s fighting force. He said in remarks to the Knesset that “the vast majority” of battalions have been “dismantled.”

A husband and wife were identified as the two people killed in a Hezbollah rocket attack Tuesday on the Golan Heights. The Golan Regional Council said Wednesday that Noa and Nir Baranes, parents of three children, were killed in the attack while they were heading home. “The entire Golan community is shocked, grieving and mourning,” it said.

The IDF said it was “looking into reports that civilians were harmed” in an attack near a school in eastern Khan Younis. The Gaza Health Ministry said at least 25 people were killed and 53 were injured in the strike; the school had been sheltering displaced people. The IDF said it used “precise munition” to strike a “terrorist from Hamas’s military wing.”

At least 38,295 people have been killed and 88,241 injured in Gaza since the war started, the Gaza Health Ministry said Wednesday. It does not distinguish between civilians and combatants but says the majority of the dead are women and children. Israel estimates that about 1,200 people were killed in Hamas’s Oct. 7 attack, including more than 300 soldiers, and it says 325 soldiers have been killed since the start of its military operations in Gaza.

Lior Soroka in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.

WORLD STAGE

NATO

Today at 2:30 p.m.

John Bolton

Former U.S. National Security Advisor

Bolton talks about the state of NATO as its leaders meet in Washington and what a second Trump administration’s foreign policy might look like.

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ECONOMY & BUSINESS



Kristy Nguyen, 23, makes videos about personal finance on TikTok.



Tiffany Morrison documents her financial journey as a single mom.

Younger women break code of silence around pay on TikTok

In push for transparency, creators open up about budgets, savings and other finances

BY TAYLOR TELFORD

Jessica Rosales, 29, has always been interested in pay transparency. In daily life, talking about what you make is “so taboo,” she explained. But such secrecy isn’t for her — or her followers on TikTok.

A cleaner in a medical facility in Michigan, Rosales posts videos documenting many aspects of her life, including how she handles her money. Followers love her “realistic paycheck breakdowns,” where she talks about what she’s paid and how she allocates it — credit cards, groceries, mortgage, utilities — breaking it all down for the camera on a cute budgeting worksheet she designed.

Rosales is among a growing contingent of workers on TikTok — largely younger women — shattering the code of silence around pay, which advocates have criticized for worsening U.S. income inequality. Their style is accessible and granular: posting videos of their “payday routines,” baring the details of their net worth and breaking down their weekly budgets line by line.

While older workers may consider talking openly about money verboten, many younger workers are accustomed to seeing people online share everything about work, from daily commutes to their experiences with layoffs. For them, being candid about money seems natural and necessary, said Kristy Nguyen, 23.

“A lot of that shift has to do with the fact that we, as a younger generation, are more open on social media,” said Nguyen, who makes videos about personal finance on TikTok. “We feel like if we’re more open and vulnerable about it, it can make a difference for other people.”

This is also part of a broader shift as pay transparency laws proliferate, requiring companies to provide expected pay ranges in job postings. At least nine states, including New York and California, and several municipalities have adopted such measures, and more are scheduled to take effect next year in Minnesota and Vermont, according to Payscale, a firm that aggregates and analyzes salary data.

Meanwhile, job sites like ZipRecruiter, Indeed and LinkedIn report higher shares of postings with salary ranges, as more companies opt to be clear about salaries whether it’s required of them or not. Advocates say access to pay information empowers workers to negotiate for fairer compensation, although some companies have sought to sidestep regulations by posting jobs with unhelpfully wide salary ranges.

It’s all adding up to a “quickly

evolving pay transparency revolution” that’s headed for a tipping point, according to Andrea Johnson, director of state policy and strategy at the National Women’s Law Center.

“Gen Z is saying, ‘This is what we expect. We’re not even going to apply to your job if you don’t list it,’” Johnson said. “Employers are realizing that this is where we’re going.”

Leveling the playing field

A big chunk of pay transparency content on TikTok comes from younger women of color — which is notable given that they are hurt the most by the gender pay gap.

Women who worked full time in wage or salaried positions in 2023 earned 83.6 percent of what men earned for comparable work, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Gaps widen across race. Black women, for example, earn 66 cents for every dollar earned by White men, according to the National Women’s Law Center.

“I rarely see men on my For You page when it comes to pay transparency,” said Nguyen, who works as a manager at Aldi and as a security guard. She said she thinks young people turn to TikTok for financial advice in part because they don’t get enough education on personal finance.

Her videos have titles like “A complete breakdown of my \$150k+ net worth at 23” and “How I budget \$11,282 for the month of April working three jobs.”

Commenters line up to thank her for her honesty — and plumb for even more detail.

“I’m soo happy you did a video for those under 40k,” one commenter said. “Sometimes it feels impossible living paycheck to paycheck, so any tips would help!”

“Would you be willing to share your Roth IRA portfolio,” another asked. (She made a separate video about it.)

Trying to translate transparency around pay into the real world has been more complicated, Nguyen has found. When Nguyen tried asking one of her managers at Aldi what she earned — to

get a sense of what she could expect as she moved up the ranks — the woman got offended and refused, saying, “It doesn’t matter what I make.” Nguyen was unsettled but not totally shocked.

The culture of pay secrecy in the American workforce is a legacy of long-standing approaches to managing workers that empowered employers and put employees at a disadvantage, said Ellen Ernst Kossek, professor of management at Purdue University’s business school. This, among other factors, has led to inequitable compensation for women, especially those who are caregivers, Kossek said.

Meanwhile, younger people today get less instruction in how to manage personal finances than previous generations, which has left many relatively unprepared to manage money, she said.

“The more you talk about money, not only at work but with friends and family, the more natural and comfortable you feel in that conversation.”

Ana Thompson, who works at General Mills and makes TikTok videos on her financial strategies

“A lot of parents don’t have time to socialize children on this,” said Kossek, who is also a scholar with the Academy of Management. “I think this might be some gap that people are picking up on as the self-taught generation.”

Pay transparency legislation “supposedly levels the playing field,” according to Lisa Simon, chief economist at Revelio Labs, a workforce analytics company. Simon said there’s evidence that women do get promoted into management at “slightly” higher rates in states with laws on the books but cautioned that these measures might not be the most effective tool to close the gender pay gap.

“It doesn’t hurt, but the problems lay elsewhere,” Simon said. She pointed to the many other barriers to promotion and access to mentorship and other opportunities women face in the workplace, as well as weak compliance with the measures in effect.

A more comfortable conversation

When Ana Thompson got her first job after graduating from college, working as a clinical research coordinator in a gastroenterology clinic, she didn’t negotiate her salary — a decision she “really regrets to this day.” In chatting with a colleague, she

soon learned she was being paid \$10,000 less than another person in the same role. Her frustration got her “fired up” about pay transparency.

Thompson, 25, who now works in marketing at General Mills, funnels that passion into videos on her TikTok, talking through her strategies on budgeting, saving and investing. She has found there a lot of other people who feel intimidated by the prospect of negotiating for a higher salary or making long-term financial plans, and she tries to respond candidly through the lens of her own experience.

“I have built a six-figure net worth at 25, and I’ve been able to do it by investing early and living below my means,” Thompson said.

Most of the pay transparency content Thompson encounters on TikTok comes from workers who make between \$70,000 and \$130,000, she estimates. She wishes people with a broader range of incomes would participate.

“The more you talk about money, not only at work but with friends and family, the more natural and comfortable you feel in that conversation,” Thompson said.

After she left an abusive marriage, Tiffany Morrison “struggled so much financially.” A newly single mom supporting two children in Central Florida, she had never had much instruction on how to manage money. But after she started following the budgetmom on TikTok (a financial counselor who was also a working mother, building herself back up after debt), Morrison saw a way forward.

Under the handle singlemom-budgeting, Morrison, 37, has been documenting her financial journey, starting with her goal of saving \$5,000. She shows herself grocery shopping at Walmart, breaking down paychecks from working as a closing agent, and allocating her money across a monthly budget calendar.

When Morrison started making videos, she didn’t see many other people in her income bracket being open about money. It was motivational, but she was still hungry for something more relatable.

She’s since found them through her posts. She’s made friends with women who messaged her directly, thanking her for her candor about the realities of being a single mom with a tight budget. She feels like they can talk more comfortably about money than with anyone else.

“Everybody I know personally is so hush-hush about it,” Morrison said. “But I feel like we’re in a different time now.”

DIGEST

STOCK MARKET S&P 500 tops 5,600 as rally keeps rolling

Stocks rose again, continuing Wall Street’s record-setting run. The S&P 500 climbed 1 percent Wednesday, setting an all-time high for the 37th time this year and marking its first close above 5,600 points.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 1.1 percent, and the Nasdaq composite added 1.2 percent to its own record.

Big technology companies led the way again after a major chip supplier reported how much its revenue jumped in June. A frenzy around artificial intelligence technology has been a major reason the U.S. stock market has climbed to records this year, as have hopes for coming cuts to interest rates.

Taiwan Semiconductor’s U.S.-listed shares rose 3.1 percent after it said its revenue climbed nearly 33 percent in June from a year earlier.

Taiwan Semiconductor, or

TSMC, makes the chips for Nvidia and others that have been driving the business world’s rush into artificial intelligence technology. The promise of big profits in the future from AI has sent Nvidia in particular to breathtaking heights over the past year, and Nvidia rose another 2.4 percent Wednesday to bring its gain for the year so far to 171.6 percent. It was again the strongest single force pushing the S&P 500 upward.

— Associated Press

PHARMACEUTICALS Drug middlemen face suits over insulin cost

The Federal Trade Commission is planning to sue UnitedHealth, Cigna and CVS Health — the three largest pharmacy-benefit managers — over their tactics for negotiating prices for drugs including insulin, the Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday.

Pharmacy benefit managers,

or PBMs, act as middlemen between drug companies and consumers. They negotiate fees and volume-based discounts, known as rebates, with drug manufacturers, create lists of medications that are covered by insurance, and reimburse pharmacies for prescriptions.

The FTC plans to file lawsuits targeting business practices related to rebates brokered with drug manufacturers, the report said, citing a person familiar with the matter.

This comes a day after the FTC issued an interim report saying the three biggest PBMs — managing 79 percent of U.S. prescription drug claims — have greatly enriched themselves at the expense of smaller pharmacies and consumers.

— Reuters

TECHNOLOGY Neuralink working on new brain implant

Neuralink, Elon Musk’s brain-chip company, is working on a

new device that it believes will require half the number of electrodes to be implanted in the brain to make it more efficient and powerful, the company’s executives said.

The company is also taking risk-mitigation measures such as skull sculpting and reducing the carbon dioxide concentration in the blood to normal level in patients, the executives said in a live stream on the social media platform X.

Neuralink is taking these risk-mitigation measures after the first participant in the device’s trial faced issues with the tiny wires that were part of the implant.

— Reuters

ALSO IN BUSINESS
Capital Factory, in partnership with the District of Columbia, has launched Station DC, a tech hub designed to foster collaboration between innovators and policymakers in the nation’s capital. The initiative launched Tuesday with

“NATO to the Future: Preparing for Coming Disruptions,” a microsummit focused on the future of technology and innovation running alongside the official NATO summit. Station DC will open a hub for hosting headlining programs, high-level gatherings and the launch of novel technologies; educate policymakers; and foster an ecosystem of public-private partnerships. The Station DC hub’s opening is estimated for 2025 in the Union Market district.

CNN is eliminating approximately 100 jobs and plans to debut its first digital subscriptions before the end of the year as the news network leans into reshaping its business. In a memo sent to staff Wednesday, CNN chief executive Mark Thompson noted that it is cutting just 100 jobs out of a total workforce of approximately 3,500. He said that open roles were closed wherever possible to minimize the total layoffs. Media organizations including

CNN have struggled to increase audiences and revenue, and have sought to diversify what they’re offering to customers. Thompson said CNN will create subscription-ready products that offer news, analysis and context in new formats.

Virginia’s largest utility, Dominion Energy Virginia, said Wednesday that it will explore using small nuclear reactors to help meet growing electricity demands while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Nuclear power has been emerging as an attractive option for states transitioning away from fossil fuels. Proponents of a new generation of smaller reactors have said they will be cheaper and quicker to bring online. There are no small modular reactors, known as SMRs, in operation in the United States, according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which oversees civilian uses of radioactive material.

— From news services

U.S., allies say they took down Russian propaganda mill powered by AI

BY JOSEPH MENN

The United States and several allies said Tuesday that they had seized control of a sophisticated Russian propaganda mill that used artificial intelligence to drive nearly a thousand covert accounts on the social network X.

Though governments have increasingly turned to AI in the past year to spread messages more widely and credibly, the takedown is unusual because the Western intelligence agencies traced it to an officer of the Russian FSB intelligence force and to a former senior editor at state-controlled publication RT,

formerly called Russia Today, as explained in court filings.

In a strikingly detailed joint advisory, agencies in the United States, the Netherlands and Canada identified software programs used to manage the network, including one named Meliorator, which created fictitious users known as "souls" in various countries. The FBI won a court order allowing it to seize two web domains that the operation had used to register the email addresses behind the accounts.

"Today's actions represent a first in disrupting a Russian-sponsored Generative AI-enhanced social media bot farm,"

FBI Director Christopher A. Wray said in a statement. "Russia intended to use this bot farm to disseminate AI-generated foreign disinformation, scaling their work with the assistance of AI to undermine our partners in Ukraine and influence geopolitical narratives favorable to the Russian government."

Automated accounts with more detailed biographies posted original content, while a supporting cast of more generic accounts liked and reshared those posts. Officials did not respond to questions about how many real users saw the posts and whether any spread the messages further, so it is unclear

how effective the campaign was.

The system evaded one of X's techniques for verifying the authenticity of users by automatically copying one-time passcodes sent to the registered email addresses. References to Facebook and Instagram in the program code indicated that the operation intended to expand to those platforms, officials said.

The agencies recommended that social media companies improve their methods for catching covertly automated behavior.

X complied with a court order to furnish information about the accounts to the FBI, then deleted them. The company did not respond to questions from

The Washington Post.

The Justice Department thanked X for its cooperation during the investigation, a sign of better communications between the government and the big social media companies after the Supreme Court upheld the right of officials to point out foreign influence operations.

John Scott-Railton, a researcher at the Canadian nonprofit the Citizen Lab, said the countries provided such detailed information about the inner workings of the botnet to help other investigators and companies know what to look for.

"They don't think this problem is going anywhere, so they

are sharing widely," Scott-Railton said.

The documents show that AI's large language models have helped Russian propagandists scale their operation and help with translation, he said. It also helps them avoid detection software that looks for repeated use of the same internet protocol addresses and other identifiers.

But many other systems are operating already, and they will get better as they adapt for what is getting detected and what is getting by, Scott-Railton said. "This isn't even the tip of the iceberg," he said. "This is the drip of the iceberg."

Filing: Campaign finance rules hit influencers

BY TAYLOR LORENZ

Caroline Gleich, the Utah Democrat vying to replace retiring Sen. Mitt Romney (R), is asking the Federal Election Commission to update its rules for the age of the online influencer.

On Wednesday, Gleich, a professional ski mountaineer and online content creator, filed a request seeking permission to sidestep campaign finance rules that she says disadvantage influencers who make a living generating sponsored posts on social media.

Under current FEC rules, any sponsored social post that features Gleich and is distributed in Utah within 90 days of the Nov. 5 election could be considered a "coordinated communication." As such, it would count as an in-kind political contribution and have to be listed in her campaign finance reports. Gleich is asking the FEC to agree that sponsored posts are "business communications" and therefore exempt from the rule.

Gleich, who appears to be the first full-time content creator to run for Congress, said in an interview with The Washington Post that the rules have already disrupted some of her sponsorships. One brand pulled out of a deal because of the complexities of booking an ad campaign with someone running for office, Gleich said, adding that negotiating new deals also has become more difficult.

"I have two other brands that I've been working with for years that are both very strongly thinking about canceling their contracts because of the general uncertainty," she said.

The FEC declined to comment on Gleich's request. But campaign finance experts acknowledged that some rules may not be suited to the influencer era.

"These rules were written when social media was in its



COMMITTEE TO ELECT CAROLINE GLEICH

Caroline Gleich, a ski mountaineer and online content creator, is running for Sen. Mitt Romney's seat.

infancy," said Daniel Weiner, director of the elections and government program at the Brennan Center, a nonpartisan law and policy institute. "So in innumerable instances, they just don't take into account the whole concept of a social media influencer."

FEC rules can also require companies that mention federal candidates in advertisements to disclose them as electioneering communications, he said.

Although content creators play a growing role in politics and are part of an industry set to be worth nearly half a trillion dollars annually by 2027, according to Goldman Sachs, the federal government collects little data on the sector. Millions work as professional influencers, but federal labor statistics offer no reliable measurements for the creator industry, even as the Census

"These rules were written when social media was in its infancy. ... They just don't take into account the whole concept of a social media influencer."

Daniel Weiner, Brennan Center, on federal election finance laws

Bureau's industry index tracks hyper-specific jobs such as "canary raiser," "magician helper" and "roller skate repairer."

Gleich says the United States needs more influencers to run for federal office because they could deliver a much-needed boost to Capitol Hill's tech savvy. "People who understand social media will make extremely powerful elected officials," she said ahead of the filing. "Content creators know firsthand the impacts of troll farms, algorithms and the threats to American democracy."

Gleich's filing also asked the FEC to let her use a different method to calculate the replacement salary candidates are allowed to draw from campaign funds, arguing that the traditional method fails to accommodate people with irregular income.

Fifth Third Bank will pay millions in settlement

Lender forced clients into duplicative car insurance policies, CFPB says

BY AARON GREGG

Fifth Third Bank has agreed to pay millions to settle allegations that it forced auto loan customers into duplicative car insurance policies that made their monthly payments more expensive, leading in some cases to repossession of vehicles from customers who could not afford to pay.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said Tuesday in court documents that the Ohio-based bank improperly applied about 37,000 insurance policies between 2011 and 2019. The agency ordered the bank to pay a \$5 million penalty and provide unspecified redress for affected customers.

CFPB Director Rohit Chopra said the bank had been "illegally loading up auto loan bills with excessive charges," with about 1,000 families losing their cars to repossession as a result.

"We are ordering the senior executives and board of directors at Fifth Third to clean up these broken business practices or else face further consequences," Chopra said.

The bank said the auto insurance practices singled out by CFPB had already been voluntarily ended in 2019, before the agency began its investigation.

"We have already taken significant action to address these legacy matters, including identifying issues and taking the initiative to set things right," Fifth Third Bank's chief legal officer, Susan Zaunbrecher, said in a statement.

It is the CFPB's latest action against the bank, which was accused in 2020 of improperly opening accounts from 2010 until at least 2016. Fifth Third agreed Tuesday to pay \$15 million to address those allegations.

The allegations about insurance policies are a separate issue, stemming from a division of the bank that works with car dealers to offer auto loans.

For years, Fifth Third's auto loans contained a "collateral protection insurance" provision allowing it to automatically add coverage for customers who don't have their own — a practice described by the CFPB as "forced insurance."

The provision was meant to give the bank a way to protect the loan collateral: the car itself. But more than half of the bank's force-placed policies were applied to customers who were already insured or got new insurance within 30 days of an earlier policy lapsing, the CFPB said.

"Fifth Third continued to force place insurance for years, demanding that consumers pay for insurance they did not need or else face delinquency, additional fees, and even repossession," the agency alleged.

The CFPB said the insurance policies carried higher premiums than owners could have obtained elsewhere, adding an average of almost \$200 to a borrower's monthly car payment.

Those charges, the CFPB said, were unlawful and led some customers to fall delinquent on their loans, with 1,005 having their vehicles repossessed. The force-placed insurance program ended in 2019, according to the CFPB and the bank.

Senate group proposes a ban on congressional stock trading

Bipartisan bill would apply to members of Congress and families

BY JACOB BOGAGE AND JACQUELINE ALEMANY

Members of Congress and their families would face stiff penalties for trading stocks under new legislation released Wednesday by a bipartisan group of senators.

The bill, introduced by Sens. Jon Ossoff (D-Ga.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), would bar members of Congress from buying and selling stocks and certain other investments, and impose similar restrictions on lawmakers' spouses and dependent children by 2027.

Members of Congress and the president and vice president would also have to divest from certain investments by 2027.

Lawmakers would face a fine worth their monthly salary or 10 percent of the value of each improper investment if they violated the new rules.

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will vote to advance the legislation to the Senate floor July 24, Peters, the committee's chair, announced Wednesday.

"I believe that Americans deserve to have confidence that their federal elected officials are making decisions that are in the



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

The new bill would bar members of Congress from buying and selling stocks and certain other investments, or face stiff penalties.

best interest of the American public and are not in the interest of any personal finances and financial decisions that they make," Peters said.

Lawmakers are already prohibited from using information gained from confidential briefings to make investments. And members must publicly disclose the stocks they buy and sell. But the penalty for such a violation is \$200, hardly a fraction of the \$174,000 salary that most members of Congress receive.

And lawmakers have been so active on the stock market that investment products have launched that allow ordinary investors to mimic the trades made by members of Congress.

Under Wednesday's legisla-

tion, members of Congress could still invest in mutual funds or pooled securities investments such as exchange-traded funds, also known as ETFs.

"People have more and more access to sensitive nonpublic information when they're in the government. It's important to alleviate those conflicts of interest, but it doesn't prevent them from being invested in the market," said Virginia Canter, chief ethics counsel at the government watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington.

Previous bipartisan pushes to ban or restrict congressional stock trading have failed. Then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in 2022 declined to bring

legislation up for a vote in the House, saying the measure lacked the votes to pass. But she also opposed the measure herself, and her husband, Paul Pelosi, is a very successful investor.

"We're a free-market economy," Pelosi said in 2022. "They [members of Congress] should be able to participate in that."

The former speaker has long maintained that she does not personally own any stock and has no knowledge of or involvement with her husband's investments.

"Let's just call a spade a spade," Hawley told reporters Wednesday. "There are a lot of members who do not want to ban stock trading."

Lawmakers who have been scrutinized over their stock trades in recent years have not faced many consequences.

Rep. Pat Fallon (R-Tex.), who failed to disclose 122 transactions valued between \$9 million and \$21 million in 2021 in a timely manner, paid \$600 in late-filing fees and corrected the record, though he refused to cooperate with a review conducted by the Office of Congressional Ethics.

The Senate Select Committee on Ethics has not issued a disciplinary sanction against a senator in over 15 years, even after a stock-trading scandal roiled the upper chamber. Then-Sens. Richard Burr (R-N.C.), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Kelly Loeffler (R-Ga.) came under scrutiny at the start of 2020 after they dumped vast stock holdings

ahead of the coronavirus-induced market plunge. Neither the Senate Ethics Committee nor the Justice Department, whose investigators launched probes into the stock sales, pursued charges.

The "clear exonerated by the Department of Justice affirms what Senator Loeffler has said all along — she did nothing wrong," a spokesperson for Loeffler said at the conclusion of the investigation, adding that "she and her husband acted entirely appropriately and observed both the letter and the spirit of the law."

The bill sponsors Wednesday said they were hopeful Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) would bring the measure for a vote before the full chamber in the coming months. Leadership in the Republican-controlled House has also signaled potential interest in a stock-trading ban.

But the legislation could face larger hurdles in the Senate, where it would need 60 votes to overcome a potential filibuster. Hawley said he was confident other Republicans would support the measure.

"Quite a number of my Republican colleagues ran in 2018, 2020, 2022 on banning stock trading. It was a part of their races. They said they would do it, they pledged to do it," Hawley said. "I would hope and anticipate and expect that there will be a number of Republicans — I think it'd be kind of hard to explain otherwise ... who would support this."

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THURSDAY OPINION

DANA MILBANK

Rural America is vanishing. One county is fighting back.

CULPEPER, VA.

Culpeper National Cemetery, on the edge of this rural town's historic center, has for more than 150 years been the final resting place for about 1,300 Union soldiers killed in the Civil War. Stone monuments honor regiments from Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania that fought the battles of Cedar Mountain, Brandy Station and others nearby.

But these hallowed grounds are about to become a monument to something else: the destruction of the American countryside.

Look east from the cemetery, to an adjacent field where cattle graze, birds sing and a brook babbles: This will become a 116-acre data center housing 2.2 million square feet of massive structures with concrete walls up to 70 feet high. Look to the south from the cemetery at another green field: Here will rise the electrical substation powering the 600-megawatt monster.

This soon-to-be eyesore, in turn, borders the approved sites of two more data centers of 2.1 million square feet apiece, one of which adjoins the site for a 2.4 million-square-foot center, which abuts the Keyser family's farm. Last week, the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors voted to turn that farm's pasture land into yet another data center of 1.5 million square feet, over passionate objections from residents who complained about wells running dry, noise, traffic, insufficient electricity and the loss of Culpeper's vistas.

"These data centers will definitely destroy the county," pleaded resident Don Haight.

But Supervisor Gary Deal lectured constituents that they "have to understand that we have to plan for the future." That future, he said, involves millions of dollars in tax revenue from data centers. "We have a low tax rate right now," Deal acknowledged, but he thinks Culpeper can "even do better."

The lure of easy dollars explains why, on a former horse farm seven miles outside of town, a massive crane is erecting the walls for still another data center. And in August, county supervisors will vote on a gargantuan, 4.6 million-square-foot data center six miles out of town in Brandy Station, spoiling the nearby Culpeper Battlefield State Park.

Sarah Parmelee of the Piedmont Environmental Council calculates that Culpeper has approved 12 million square feet of data centers, or the equivalent of 66 Walmart Supercenters. (The one in Brandy Station would add 25 more Supercenters.) When completed, the sites already approved will suck up 2.5 gigawatts of power — more than 10 times the entire county's current electricity usage of 240 megawatts — and put an incalculable strain on the area's water supply to cool the plants. Powering them would require some 25,000 acres of solar fields, and the construction of miles of high-voltage transmission lines across the countryside.

This anything-goes approach to development isn't limited to data centers. At the northern end of the county, a developer is deforesting upward of 500 acres in an area known as Clevenger's Corner. The cookie-cutter development of more than 700 single-family homes and townhouses is miles from any town; the only nearby amenity to speak of is an Exxon station. But residents have already begun moving into this "beautifully designed masterplan community," where you can buy a nearly 4,900-square-foot home with golf-course views and a three-car garage for "mid \$800K."

Given such frenetic development, the rural county's population has exploded, rising more than 50 percent from 2000 to 2020. New arrivals need schools and roads and fire departments, and so Culpeper hungers for additional tax revenue — but never seems to seek it from the residents themselves. Data centers could provide more than \$100 million a year in taxes, equivalent to a third of the county's current budget. Culpeper's economic de-



DANA MILBANK/THE WASHINGTON POST



DANA MILBANK/THE WASHINGTON POST

Top: A massive data center under construction in Virginia's Culpeper County. Above: A building site in Rappahannock County, which sets limits on development.

velopment director, Bryan Rothamel, tells me that "overall, we like the picturesque of Culpeper." But he says Culpeper needs to "evolve to what is needed in the 21st century," which means still more development.

It's the latest chapter in the story of how the internet ate Northern Virginia. The insatiable need for computing infrastructure, first for the cloud and now for artificial intelligence, has already consumed suburban counties such as Loudoun and Prince William in Northern Virginia. Now it is threatening to devour rural counties such as Culpeper. Back in 1749, a 17-year-old George Washington served as surveyor for what was then the frontier county of Culpeper. Now, after nearly three centuries as a rural community, Culpeper is on the frontier of rural destruction.

It doesn't have to be this way. Culpeper's neighbor Rappahannock County has gone in the opposite direction. Its board of supervisors has for years rejected almost all development, and its population hasn't grown at all. With 7,348 residents in the 2020 Census, Rappahannock has roughly the same population it had in 2000 — and in 1920, for that matter. Rappahannock fends off development with its 25-acre minimum zoning requirement, and resists construction of cellular towers to protect its "view shed," content to leave most of the county in a dead zone. "I don't even want to talk about growth. It's not a word that should be in our active vocabulary," Keir Whitson, vice chairman of the board of supervisors, tells me.

Whitson even torpedoed a local philanthropist's plan to build three dozen afford-

able housing units in the town of Washington, the county seat. He forced the already modest development to reduce its size to 18 apartments and townhouses, all but two offered below market rate. It was a tough decision to reject what was, for the county, a gift of free affordable housing. It followed an easier decision to reject a 53-unit rental property on the approach to Shenandoah National Park.

I think Whitson went too far in rejecting the affordable housing gift, but I respect his reason. "I was speaking on behalf of my 1,500 constituents who, generally speaking, don't really see the need for upending the way Rappahannock County looks and feels," he says. "And of those 1,500 constituents, at least half of them, if not more, are people whose families have been here for multiple generations. They carry a lot of weight with me when they say, 'Hey, we don't need this, and we don't want change.'"

Anti-development thinking comes at a cost, driving up property prices and leaving Rappahannock County with a shortage of affordable housing and a shoestring county budget that funds only bare-bones services. But that's a trade-off Rappahannock is willing to make. While Culpeper and other nearby counties surrender to development, tiny Rappahannock has built a firewall to preserve its rural way of life.

"We're not chasing additional revenues," Whitson says flatly. "Nobody wants housing developments." And data centers? Fuhgeddaboutit. "We don't want Rappahannock to be Anywhere USA, and we do not need to give up its unique rural character."

Similar tensions between development and rural character are playing out across the country. The American Farmland Trust reports that the United States lost more than 11 million acres of farmland and ranchland between 2001 and 2016 to urbanization, low-density residences and other development. An apparent trend toward dense urban living lit hopes in the world of land-use planners, but those hopes are guttering out. The growing popularity of urban living has been offset by the rise of remote work. "Even though we were on a good trajectory for a while to have less cookie-cutter development and less suburban sprawl, I think we're back in a place where it is almost as worrisome as it might have been 15 or 20 years ago," says John Piotti, president of the trust.

Industrial development and Amazon-style warehouses jeopardize rural life on the edges of America's metropolitan areas. Solar fields to help power these energy gluttons are expected to gobble up 10 million acres of rural land over the next 10 years. What might be lost? "Some of the absolute best farmland we have," Piotti says, "is also the land that's most threatened." The county seats of Culpeper and Rappahannock are both about 90 minutes from downtown Washington.

Northern Virginia — by far the nation's largest data center market — had 51 million square feet of data centers at the end of last year, the real estate giant JLL reported, with another 58.6 million planned. Some 70 percent of the world's internet traffic reportedly goes through six square miles in Ashburn, called "Data Center Alley." Prince William County last year approved what would be the world's largest data center, at 23 million square feet — and data center mania has pushed farther out, to Fauquier, Caroline, Louisa, Spotsylvania, Orange and Henrico counties, in addition to Culpeper. Orange has approved data centers as part of a 2,600-acre mixed-use development called Wilderness Crossing — prompting the National Trust for Historic Preservation to put the nearby Civil War Battle of the Wilderness area on its list of "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places." Even deeply rural Madison County, Rappahannock's neighbor to the south, is considering data centers.

As The Post has reported, Northern Virginia will need the equivalent of several large nuclear power plants to serve all the planned data capacity. The federal government is considering chewing up more rural land by clearing a massive transmission line to bring power to the area, possibly from coal-fired plants in West Virginia. In Loudoun, a county supervisor recently wrote a white paper

suggesting that power for data centers could be provided by on-site nuclear reactors. But as the development and the damage have spread, so has the resistance. In March, Loudoun supervisors rejected a data center application after dozens of residents spoke out against it.

Here in Culpeper, residents overwhelmingly opposed the latest data center at last week's county supervisors meeting. "We run the risk of losing what Culpeper is," pleaded resident Bob Sachs. A couple of residents suggested the industry was bribing county supervisors.

The only resident speaking in favor of the project was the guy who was selling his farm to the developers. "When it comes down to it, it's dirt," he said. "It's my right and my family's right to do whatever they feel with their dirt."

Rappahannock has a development plan: no development.

"There's a group in the county we refer to as the no's; they just say no to everything," says Chuck Akre, a wealthy investor who lives in the county. "They have prevailed."

Akre is the philanthropist who attempted to build the affordable housing development that got halved by the county supervisors. "Looking a gift horse in the mouth" is how Akre's adviser Betsy Dietel puts it.

The scaled-back project, called Rush River Commons, is under construction now. One building, just opened, houses the Rappahannock Food Pantry in a sprawling 4,500-square-foot spread. Another, wrapped in Tyvek now and opening in November, will be home to the county's social services department, along with a nonprofit serving seniors and a cafe. The housing units, offered on a sliding scale to those earning well below the area's median income, open in February. The whole thing occupies an unused area of the village just two-tenths of a mile from the county's renowned upscale amenity, the Inn at Little Washington. It's exactly the sort of "smart growth" development that planners most admire, adding needed housing and services while protecting rural areas.

Some worry that the county's hostility to development will backfire. There's a fear that a wily builder could successfully challenge Rappahannock County's 25-acre zoning in court and then force large-scale development on the county. Even John McCarthy, who was county administrator when the 25-acre zoning went into effect, admits it "doesn't pass the sniff test on economic equity."

But Whitson, the county supervisor who forced Akre to scale back his development, believes Rappahannock can solve its housing problem while holding development at bay. The supervisors have tried to free up more rental housing by blocking residents from offering their properties for short-term rentals such as Airbnb. Whitson is looking at ways to subsidize property owners to rehab unused tenant houses on their farms to use as rental homes.

From all that I've seen, most Rappahannock residents agree. They're content to live in a place with few amenities, few services and few jobs if it means preserving their unhurried rural life, their tight-knit community, their panoramic views and their abundant wildlife. Life here is pretty much as it always was. No traffic lights. More cattle than people. Everybody knows everybody. And the closest thing to a "data center" is the cluttered office of the Rappahannock Historical Society.

"People say to me, pretty consistently, 'Come on, buddy, get over it. You know Rappahannock County's got to change,' " Whitson says. "I'm like, 'No, it doesn't.' I understand change is inevitable, but in Rappahannock County, change can be tiny, tiny change."

To save our countryside, we're going to need a lot more such leaders with the courage to think small.

CHARLES LANE

Give Robert Hur his reputation back

On Sunday, Rep. Adam Schiff (Calif.), like other Democrats, acknowledged that President Biden's "performance on the [June 27] debate stage ... rightfully raised questions among the American people about whether the president has the vigor to defeat Donald Trump."

Later in his remarks, on NBC's "Meet the Press," Schiff urged the president to consult about his political future not just with family but also "people with some distance and objectivity."

Wise words — but a change in tone from the Schiff who, at a March 12 congressional hearing, condemned a witness as a disingenuous partisan for suggesting Biden might have age-related memory trouble.

"You must have understood the impact of your decision to go beyond the specifics of a particular document to go to the very general, to your own personal prejudicial, subjective opinion of the president," Schiff lectured. "One you knew would be amplified by his political opponent. When you knew that would influence a political campaign. You had to

understand that and you did it anyway."

The witness was Robert K. Hur, the special counsel whom Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed to investigate Biden's retention of classified documents after leaving the vice presidency in 2017. Hur, a registered but not particularly partisan Republican, had decided against prosecuting Biden. But Schiff and other Democrats on the panel were out to discredit him over his explanation of why he made that call. As Hur put it in a report to Garland, he believed — after interviews in which Biden rambled and struggled to recall facts and events — that jurors would have reasonable doubt regarding the criminal intent of "a sympathetic, well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory."

Now, the 81-year-old Biden's reelection campaign is in crisis over his stumbling performance in the debate with former president Trump, and it's obvious that Hur's report was precisely the sort of honest account from an objective outsider that Schiff is now recommending.

However the current disaster ultimately plays out, it's worth revisiting the

Hur episode as a key chapter in what appears to be a concerted effort by the White House and its political allies to deflect legitimate questions regarding the president's fitness for office.

Basically, Hur was subjected to a campaign of vilification.

It began even before Garland released Hur's report on Feb. 8. "A global and pejorative judgment on the President's powers of recollection in general is uncalled for and unfounded," Biden's lawyers wrote Garland Feb. 7.

An angry President Biden used mild profanity at a hastily called news conference the night the report came out, declaring his memory "fine" and denouncing Hur for asking him when his son Beau had died — though transcripts later showed the president had misremembered an exchange in which he actually raised that subject.

Vice President Harris chimed in on Feb. 9: "The way that the president's demeanor in that report was characterized could not be more wrong on the facts and clearly politically motivated. And so I will say that when it comes to the role and

responsibility of a prosecutor in a situation like that, we should expect that there would be a higher level of integrity than what we saw."

There followed high-minded social media posts and media commentary attacking Hur's judgment, heavily salted with words such as "gratuitous," "inappropriate" and "unprofessional." The heretic-stoning culminated at the aforementioned March 12 hearing, called by the House Judiciary Committee's Republican majority, ironically, to flay Hur for not pressing charges against Biden.

Sinking below even Harris's slam on Hur's "integrity," Rep. Hank Johnson (D-Ga.) accused him of "doing everything you can do to get President Trump reelected so that you can get appointed as a federal judge or perhaps to another position in the Department of Justice. Isn't that correct?" Hur, credibly, denied it.

Perhaps if Democrats had not met Hur's report with such an outpouring of denial, but treated it as a warning, they might not be in such a predicament today. Certainly this judicious and professional lawyer would have been spared

an assault on his reputation.

To be sure, there are legitimate questions as to whether Hur's report laid it on a bit thicker than Justice Department regulations suggest, because in such a high-profile case the attorney general was bound to release what was technically a confidential document.

Nevertheless, it's clear the only partisan hit job here was the one waged by Hur's critics.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration is fighting a House subpoena for the audio recordings of Hur's interviews with Biden, citing executive privilege and the need to protect Justice Department processes. Opponents of release argue — plausibly — that publicly available transcripts contain all the relevant information, and that the lower chamber's Republican majority is just out to exploit the audio politically.

Events since June 27 have altered the balance. If the president and his team are as confident of his fitness as they say, they should stop objecting to disclosure. They might as well give transparency a try; wagon-circling has failed.

OPINION

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

The Venezuelan moment

AFTER 25 years of politically authoritarian and economically ruinous rule under Hugo Chávez and his successor, Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela is heading toward a critical July 28 national election. Against all odds, a resurgent opposition could threaten the regime's hold on power. But it is possible that Mr. Maduro will cling to office through fraud or force. Everything must be done to ensure he does not — and that voters make the most of this opportunity to restore freedom and democracy.

Mr. Maduro has spent years trying to destroy the opposition, detaining thousands of activists, journalists and dissidents and subjecting them to beatings, rape, electric shocks, mutilation, asphyxiation and other types of torture. With control of the media, courts, law enforcement and military, Mr. Maduro has blocked many opposition candidates from competing for power. U.S. initiatives to back opposition forces, through pressure and sanctions under President Donald Trump and through negotiations under President Biden, have met with mixed results. Despite sanctions that have hit Venezuela's crucial oil industry, Mr. Maduro has survived thanks, in part, to backing from Russia, China, Cuba and Iran. Once one of the most prosperous nations of Latin America, Venezuela is now confronting one of the

world's worst humanitarian crises and the flight of more than 7.5 million people since 2015 — including hundreds of thousands to the United States.

Remarkably, after so many years of repression, the opposition is alive and would stand an excellent chance at the ballot box — assuming the election is not stolen. Specious court rulings disqualified the opposition's charismatic front-running candidate María Corina Machado, but she has remained active on the campaign trail, rallying the democratic Unitary Platform behind a former diplomat, Edmundo González Urrutia. Tumultuous crowds greet them throughout the country, including, on Saturday, in Chavez's hometown of Barinas. A poll taken between May 23 and June 5 showed that two-thirds of voters want a change of government. There is a high level of interest in voting. The survey showed González leading 56 percent to 35 percent among those likeliest to turn out.

For Mr. Maduro a loss would mean not only ouster from office but also the end of the wealth and power that flow from membership in a regime known for spectacular corruption. The same goes for the elite who surround and depend on him for their privileges. At the end of the campaign, he might be tempted to abort the vote through brute force or declare himself the winner when he is not. Either would be disastrous for the Venezuelan people and for an

entire hemisphere that badly needs a stable political outcome in this strategic nation. The military and security forces will play a key part; but no one can be sure whether they would defend Mr. Maduro against the people or defect rather than resist overwhelming popular demands for change.

This might be Venezuela's last, best, chance to end a generation of misrule.

For now, signs point toward hardball from Mr. Maduro. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said he continues to receive "reports of detentions as election day approaches, including of supporters and members of the opposition." Mr. Türk said his office has documented increased threats, harassment and assaults against civil society participants, journalists, unionists and other regime critics, "including through arrests and prosecutions, and 38 cases of arbitrary detention."

The nongovernmental organization Access to Justice reported in June there have been 46 arbitrary arrests for political reasons so far this year, including 18 members of Ms. Machado's party. The Maduro-controlled National Electoral Council recently decreed that election observers can only work in the precincts where they vote. Also, on May 29, the election council disinvited the European Union from sending election observers. The United Nations said it was sending a team of four — a pitiful showing. The Carter Center, the nonprofit human rights group established by former president Jimmy Carter that works to promote democracy and resolve conflicts, is also sending a small group of monitors.

Last year, the Biden administration eased some sanctions in exchange for Mr. Maduro's promise to let the opposition carry out an unfettered campaign. Mr. Maduro has subverted the agreement by arresting members of the opposition and using the courts to block the candidacy of Ms. Machado, and the United States reinstated some sanctions. Absorbed as he is in his own difficult election, and other foreign crises, Mr. Biden doesn't have much bandwidth left for Venezuela. But he and democratic leaders in Latin America and Europe should pay attention and speak out for a free and fair vote. This might be Venezuela's last, and best, chance to end a generation of misrule.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What students need to succeed

In his July 3 Wednesday Opinion column, "How schools can zero in on dropouts," Rahm Emanuel discussed his initiative to require all Chicago high school students to present an educational or vocational post-graduation plan to receive their diploma. The program involves advanced academic opportunities and counseling for students throughout high school, increasing graduation rates and college enrollment.

As a public high school student, I believe that along with academic enrichment like the Advanced Placement program, students should have opportunities for vocational training to develop career-related skills in high school through real-world experience. This training would give students a concrete path to employment, which can prompt them to complete high school and attend college if the jobs they are interested in require a degree to gain the expertise needed to enter the workforce. Many vocational training programs assist students with attending a 2- or 4-year college and provide high school and college credits, encouraging students to complete high school and pursue postsecondary education. Vocational training can be conducted through mentorship programs via partnerships between high schools and local institutions, which connect students with experts at professional organizations. These opportunities will allow students to learn skills related to their area of interest in a more engaging setting outside the traditional classroom.

While advanced academic opportunities and career counseling increase graduation rates and facilitate career development, offering vocational mentorship as well will be a more effective way to encourage students to seek employment and will give them a more concrete idea of what awaits them after college.

Sanchali Banerjee, Herndon

Darnell Epps's description of his decision to pursue a diploma in manufacturing technology and machining in addition to his juris doctor degree resonated with me in many ways.

I am a retiree from the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration, having focused for over 30 years on identifying and supporting strategies to identify job opportunities for individuals in need of gainful employment. My first job after graduating from college was teaching English to male students at a New York City vocational high school. I am also the mother of a Yale Law School graduate who works for the New York City government.

As Mr. Epps notes, his trajectory from Yale Law School to trade school "reaffirmed my belief in the untapped potential of skilled trades. It has shown me that the future of American prosperity depends not only on lawyers and executives but also on machinists, welders and all skilled tradespeople who are the backbone of our economy."

Bravo, Mr. Epps, for your support of "a new generation of workers who can thrive in the advanced manufacturing renaissance" as well as your personally machined metal gavel which bridges both your trade school diploma as well as your JD degree.

Lois A. Engel, Washington

The value of a college degree

The Post's June 17 front-page article "A diploma in hand, but no foot in the door," about lack of entry-level jobs for new college grads, didn't capture an essential point that appeared later in the piece.

As labor expert Harry Holzer states toward the end of the article, "It might take six months or nine months, but these graduates will find jobs." That is true for one simple reason: They have college degrees. Despite a lot of chatter about skills-based hiring, evidence shows that holding a bachelor's degree is still the predominant predictor of whether someone will secure a good job — one that pays good wages and offers benefits.

The article points out that "service-sector jobs at

hair salons, gyms and medical establishment" are growing, but those jobs are disproportionately held by people without a college degree and usually don't pay enough to support an individual, let alone a family. So, while it may be news that recent college graduates are taking somewhat longer than they might expect to secure their first post-graduation jobs, it is important that The Post's readers understand the longer-term reality: A college degree remains a very good investment for anyone who wants to earn a good living.

Josh Wyner, Washington

The writer is the executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

The cost of ending DEI

The disturbing backlash against diversity, equity and inclusion programs, as described in The Post's June 27 front-page article "Conservative lawsuits undo diversity programs," is not only wrongheaded and racist — it is shortsighted.

Aside from being the right thing to do, both morally and ethically, equity and justice programs help fuel local economies.

In particular, programs that train and support returning citizens or individuals impacted by the justice system who are working to secure employment — a disproportionate percentage of whom are Black men and other people of color —

help to reduce recidivism and develop economic mobility, creating stronger and safer families and communities. Further, these programs help companies. By strategically targeting and tailoring the training to meet the needs of industry in local markets, such programs provide a well-prepared and certified workforce for positions that are in high demand yet can be difficult for companies to fill and retain. Examples include health-care support and office operations, construction and maintenance, and logistics and warehousing.

The companies and industries who partner with second-chance workforce-training programs know they are getting highly motivated, fully trained and certified employees who are eager to change their lives and communities for the better. Helping these individuals achieve upward mobility and financial empowerment produces a ripple effect of long-term positive outcomes and stems the tide of poverty for future generations.

Liz McGown, New York

The writer is communications director for the workforce development nonprofit STRIVE.

And questions to ask about DEI

In his June 28 op-ed, "Meet Dr. DEI, a new personification of old right-wing grievances," Theodore R. Johnson puts diversity, equity and inclusion programs on a pedestal and gives short

shrift to anyone who might question this approach. It seems that in his view, no honest, good-hearted people can question these efforts, just those who feel threatened by diversity and want to maintain their power and thus are easily manipulated by malevolent far-right forces who inflame them for political gain.

In some cases, this may be true. In my case, it is not.

I am a moderate Democrat who is fine with the 2023 Supreme Court decision to disallow the consideration of race in college admissions. After more than half a century, I think it is time to end affirmative action in college admissions. I am also not unhappy that special government programs to advance minority businesses developed more than 50 years ago that have presumed minorities are automatically "socially disadvantaged" are being reevaluated.

We should also make sure we are pursuing the best solutions when racial disparities are identified. To take one example, it has become clear that White social workers pass licensing exams at significantly higher rates than do Black or Hispanic social workers. The response in many social work communities has been that we must adopt a new standard of licensing that does not include licensing exams at all. In Illinois, for example, legislation has been passed to provide alternative pathway to licensure that does not include passing an exam. The D.C. city council is proposing similar legislation, as are other states. Rather than eliminating an opportunity for candidates to display the requisite knowledge for competent practice, shouldn't we be exploring how institutions can address educational challenges of historically marginalized communities, or a call for an in-depth analysis of licensing exams themselves?

Nothing in our democracy should be beyond debate. That includes DEI programs.

Bruce Kirby, Rockville

In The Post's June 19 news article "Poll finds most in U.S. approve of DEI, despite legal setbacks," the authors show poll results from a question asked two different ways.

Half the respondents were asked "In recent years, some companies have adopted diversity, equity and inclusion programs, or 'DEI' programs. Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing for companies to adopt these programs?" 61 percent of respondents said it was good, and 34 said it was bad.

The other half were asked "In recent years, some companies have adopted programs to hire more employees from groups that are underrepresented in their workforce, such as racial and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities and to promote equity in the workplace. Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing for companies to adopt these programs?"

Unsurprisingly, there were significant differences in the results: 61 percent of all respondents said "DEI programs" were good, and 69 percent supported "programs to hire more employees from groups that are underrepresented."

I suspect that there would be even bigger differences if respondents were asked whether they supported programs "to discriminate in favor of certain groups, resulting in discrimination against people in other groups even if some of those individuals might be better qualified." That is what the Supreme Court found objectionable, and it is why many people think DEI stands for Didn't Earn It.

Tom Hafer, Arlington

Guest opinion submissions

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DRAWING BOARD



OPINION

KAREN TUMULTY

Thoughts from inside Biden HQ

WILMINGTON, DEL. Top strategists at President Biden's reelection headquarters here believe there is only one way to put the nightmare of his debate performance behind them.

Looking ahead, "this has to be about Trump," deputy campaign manager Rob Flaherty told me when I visited the operation, which is housed in a modern high-rise office building downtown. The walls are festooned with "Dark Brandon" images.

Granted, some questionable assumptions now underlie any theory of how the 81-year-old president would pull out a victory this fall over his predecessor, Donald Trump.

Chief among them is whether Biden can demonstrate he is sharp and vigorous enough to quiet doubts that he is up to another four years in the job. A test will come Thursday evening, when the president holds a rare solo news conference. He cannot afford a shaky performance.

Though Biden has been steadfast in his insistence that he will not step aside, elected officials, major donors and other influential figures in his shaken party are deeply divided over whether their chances would be better if they gambled on a new standard-bearer at the top of their ticket. The palpable fear is that Biden will not only go down to defeat, restoring Trump to the Oval Office but also take the Democrats' Senate majority and their hopes of regaining the House with him.

Public polling since the June 27 debate has shown little movement in the race, which perhaps indicates how deeply entrenched and immovable Democrats and Republicans are.

The Biden campaign's internal numbers, I'm told, show that some slippage has occurred since the debate. It has been largely among what Biden strategists refer to as "engagement targets." They include younger, non-White and female voters who were with Biden in 2020 but have been less enthusiastic this time around. The decline in their support since the debate has been within the margin of error, officials say, and there is no sign yet that they are moving toward Trump.

These voters are also less likely than intense and attentive partisans to have actually watched the entire debate, which means most of their perceptions of what happened there are coming from news accounts and clips on social media.

But there is also a silver lining for Biden — or perhaps, given the fragility of the current moment, it would be more accurate to call it a tinfoil one. The debate has put many of the president's grass-roots supporters on high alert. The campaign says \$38 million poured into its coffers between the Thursday night of the debate and the following Sunday, and legions of new volunteers are signing up.

What that shows is that his most ardent supporters believe Biden deserves an opportunity to make the case that what Americans saw on the debate stage in Atlanta was an aberration.

What the campaign now must do is redirect the focus that has been almost entirely on their candidate ever since. "This election is about Trump. It's our job to make that case," said a senior adviser.

Hence, you hear them talking constantly lately about Project 2025, an initiative overseen by right-wing Trump allies and the conservative Heritage Foundation that details a policy blueprint for the next Republican president.

Major media organizations, including The Post, have been reporting since last year about the radical proposals, such as militarized mass deportations, sharp limits on abortion and handing the White House greater influence over the Justice Department. But the political resonance of Project 2025, which gives substance to Trump's authoritarian rhetoric, did not become apparent to the Biden campaign until a few months ago, when it noticed a sharp rise in chatter about Project 2025 among liberal political influencers on TikTok.

It didn't hurt that even the name Project 2025 carries a whiff of dark, conspiratorial plotting. The Democratic National Committee has begun placing billboards about the project. And Biden campaign officials are planning to focus on it in the advertising they expect to run during next week's Republican National Convention.

That the attacks are having an impact is evidenced by the fact that Trump is distancing himself from the proposals for his next term in office. He wrote on his Truth Social platform that he knows "nothing about Project 2025" and has "no idea who is behind it."

What hasn't changed since the debate, Biden campaign officials insist, is that this is going to be a close election. And they believe they have built an operation that is better equipped for an outcome that could be decided by fewer than 100,000 voters in seven states. They have a far greater presence than Trump on the ground, with 1,200 staffers in the battleground states, and are investing heavily in voter registration, as well as ensuring that their supporters not only vote but that their ballots are counted.

In their meme-filled headquarters 100 miles from the turmoil that is going on in Washington, Biden's campaign is putting its efforts into what it still has the power to control. What is out of their hands is whether Americans can still have confidence in their candidate.



President Biden and first lady Jill Biden at the White House on Sunday.

AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

I'm a Democratic senator. Biden should withdraw.

BY PETER WELCH

I have great respect for President Biden. He saved our country from a tyrant. He is a man of uncommon decency. He cares deeply about our democracy. He has been one of the best presidents of our time.

But I, like folks across the country, am worried about November's election. The stakes could not be higher. We cannot unsee President Biden's disastrous debate performance. We cannot ignore or dismiss the valid questions raised since that night.

I understand why President Biden wants to run. He saved us from Donald Trump once and wants to do it again. But he needs to reassess whether he is the best candidate to do so. In my view, he is not.

For the good of the country, I'm calling on President Biden to withdraw from the race.

Trump is a felon. He is a pathological liar. He is a menace. And he is sure to be emboldened by his activist Supreme Court, which granted him near-total immunity.

When Trump was president, he consistently put his own interests ahead of the nation's — culminating with his attempt to overturn the 2020 election and disrupt the peaceful transfer of power. He has called the Jan. 6 insurrectionists "patriots."

MAGA Republicans, meanwhile, have clearly stated their plans for a second Trump term, laying out an extremist agenda with their Project 2025.

But the national conversation is focused on President Biden's age and capacity. Only he can change it.

I deliver this assessment with sadness. Vermont loves Joe Biden. President Biden and Vice President Harris received a larger vote percentage here than in any other state. But regular Vermonters are worried that he can't win this time, and they're terrified of another Trump presidency. These are real concerns of regular voters who I've heard from recently — like a mom who counts on the child tax credit and seniors who rely on Medicare.

The latest data makes it clear that the political peril to Democrats is

escalating. States that were once strongholds are now leaning Republican. These new shifts — in Minnesota, New Hampshire, Nevada, Arizona and Georgia — must be taken seriously, not denied or ignored.

The good news is that President Biden has united the party and created a deep bench that can defeat Trump. Vice President Harris is a capable, proven leader, and we have other electable, young, energizing Democratic governors and senators in swing states. Not only do these leaders have experience running and winning in tough political environments, they also have fundraising networks, media experience, charisma, and the ability to inspire voters across generations and across our big tent.

We have asked President Biden to do so much for so many for so long. It has required unmatched selflessness and courage. We need him to put us first, as he has done before. I urge him to do it now.

The writer, a Democrat, represents Vermont in the U.S. Senate.

DAVID IGNATIUS

A Gaza cease-fire agreement looks within reach

After months of agonizing negotiation, the Biden administration appears close to a cease-fire deal that would halt major fighting in Gaza, release some Israeli hostages and surge humanitarian aid to desperate Palestinian civilians.

A senior U.S. official told me Wednesday that "the framework is agreed" and the parties are now "negotiating details of how it will be implemented." To forge the deal, Middle East adviser Brett McGurk and CIA Director William J. Burns have been shuttling among regional capitals since November.

Officials caution that although the framework is in place, a final pact probably isn't imminent, and the details are complex and will take time to work through.

If final agreement could be reached, it would be a ringing validation of President Biden's patient diplomacy, which has tried to balance America's role as peacemaker in the Middle East with strong military support for Israel. It would also create a potential valedictory moment for the president, affording him a chance to step back honorably from his quest for a second term or, conversely, to double down.

Like most peace agreements, this one would reflect in part the exhaustion of both sides. After nine months of war, Israel wants to rest its troops and prepare for possible conflicts with Iran and its proxies. Hamas, in "rough shape" in its underground lair, according to one U.S. official, is said to be low on ammunition and supplies. It's also facing growing pressure from battered Palestinian civilians, who are increasingly vocal in demanding a truce.

The agreement, described Wednesday by U.S. officials, envisions a three-stage resolution of the conflict. First would be a six-week cease-fire, during which Hamas would release 33 Israeli hostages, including all female prisoners, all men over 50 and all who are wounded. Israel would release hundreds of Palestinians from its prisons and withdraw its troops from densely populated areas toward the eastern border of Gaza. Humanitarian aid would flow in, hospitals would be repaired, and crews would begin clearing the rubble.

The stumbling block has been the transition to Phase 2, in which Hamas would release the male soldiers who remain as hostages and both sides would agree to a "permanent end to

hostilities" with "a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza." Each side feared the other would use the initial pause to rearm and return to battle. And Israel wanted to make sure it achieved its primary goal of blocking Hamas from ruling Gaza again.

The breakthrough came recently, when Hamas relented on its demand for a written guarantee on a permanent end to the fighting. Instead, it accepted the reassuring language of a U.N. Security Council resolution, passed last month, affirming the U.S.-negotiated deal. Here's the key passage: "If the negotiations take longer than six weeks for phase one, the ceasefire will still continue as long as negotiations continue," the U.N. resolution says. American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators would "work to ensure negotiations keep going until all the agreements are reached and phase two is able to begin."

U.S. officials say the framework of a three-stage deal is down to implementation details.

Israel and Hamas have both signaled their acceptance of an "interim governance" plan that would begin with phase two, in which neither Hamas nor Israel would rule Gaza. Security would be provided by a force trained by the United States and backed by moderate Arab allies, drawn from a core group of about 2,500 supporters of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza who have already been vetted by Israel. Hamas has told mediators that it is "prepared to relinquish authority to the interim governance arrangement," a U.S. official said.

As security expands in postwar Gaza, the peace plan envisions a third phase, with what the U.N. resolution describes as a "multi-year reconstruction plan."

As U.S. mediators moved closer to finalizing this deal, they got crucial help from their diplomatic partners, Qatar and Egypt. To pressure Hamas, Qatar told the group's representatives they could not remain in Doha if they rejected the pact. Egypt provided last-minute help by accepting an innova-

tive U.S. proposal to block any new tunnels across the border between Egypt and Gaza after Israel withdraws its troops.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who has emerged as a key contact in the negotiations, issued a statement Wednesday noting "progress ... with Egypt" toward a plan "that will stop smuggling attempts and will cut off potential supplies for Hamas."

If the cease-fire deal is clinched, it will open the way for two other major changes in the Middle East landscape — involving Lebanon and Saudi Arabia — that could reduce the danger of a broader war.

Lebanon has signaled that following a Gaza truce, it would endorse a package that includes withdrawal of Hezbollah forces north from the border to near the Litani River. The agreement would also include Israeli acceptance of border changes that Hezbollah has long demanded and other confidence-building measures to end the deadly exchange of rocket fire between the two sides.

The Lebanon framework has been negotiated by Amos Hochstein, a member of national security adviser Jake Sullivan's staff. Rather than talking directly with Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed militia that dominates Beirut, Hochstein has met with Nabih Berri, the Shiite speaker of the Lebanese parliament and a key Hezbollah ally.

A final possible bonus of a Gaza cease-fire is that Saudi Arabia has signaled it is prepared to "move forward on normalization" of relations with Israel, according to a U.S. official. Riyadh wants a pathway toward a Palestinian state as part of such a deal, but that's currently a bridge too far for a traumatized Israel. Finalizing normalization will take time and diplomatic finesse.

The Gaza war has been a nightmare for all the combatants — starting with the horrific Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attack through to a shattering Israeli retaliatory campaign that killed tens of thousands of Palestinians. It was a searing test, too, for Biden, who tried to be Israel's stalwart ally even as he clashed with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the war's civilian toll.

"Every war must end," as strategist Fred Iklé wrote about Vietnam. Gaza isn't over. But as one White House official put it late Wednesday: "fingers crossed."

MARC FISHER

Netflix brings stranger things to the mall

This is rich: Netflix, which played a pioneering role in luring Americans out of malls and onto our couches, is opening themed stores at, yes, the mall.

Can Netflix House — which will sell show- and movie-related merch and meals, offering customers a chance to dance like characters on "Bridgerton" and walk over a glass bridge as on "Squid Game" (presumably with fewer deaths) — bring back the glory days of the mall?

I rose from the couch and drove over to Lakeforest Mall in Gaithersburg to find out. The first live interview targets I found, right near the curiously quiet entrance to the mall's five-plex movie theater, honked with derision when I described a Netflix store where you don't watch movies with an audience, but rather buy things emblazoned with movie-themed logos.

When I looked up from my notebook, I realized my interview was going poorly because I was speaking to two Canada geese seeking a bit of shade on a broiling day. The geese were the only signs of life at Lakeforest. The theater doors were boarded up. The vast parking lots were dotted with tall weeds rather than vehicles.

The chain-link fence surrounding Lakeforest should have clued me in. The mall, born in 1978, died last year, victim of not just Netflix, but Amazon, eBay, Etsy, big boxes, social media, the pandemic — the infinite allure of clicks and screens.

Hundreds of malls have shuttered in recent years, including about half of those in the D.C. region, representing not just the obvious pivot from in-person purchasing to online shopping, but also the reduction of retail to a solo sport, largely stripped of its social function. People who still want to wander among other shoppers and touch the wares can do that, but mainly in more targeted retail settings, often among people like themselves, at high-end shopping meccas such as Tysons Galleria or CityCenterDC or at discount big boxes. As in so much of American culture, the middle has dropped out.

It's easy to mock the mall culture of the '70s and '80s — those cookie-cutter behemoths with tacky food courts, essentially high school cafeterias with slightly better food; endless hallways where old folks took morning constitutional; fashion shows and local barber shop quartet concerts; evening scenes of strutting, cruising teens.

Making fun of the mall was always a way to assert one's superiority. Likewise, today's fascination with dead malls is a somewhat snide exercise in nostalgia. YouTube offers languorous strolls through Lakeforest in its final weeks, or Alexandria's Landmark Mall (1965-2017) before it was turned into a shelter for homeless people, then demolished, the site now slated for a hospital, fire station, more than 2,000 housing units, some pickleball courts and, of course, retail and restaurants.

Landmark, never spiffy, is probably not on Netflix's radar as a future site for its House concept. The first Netflix stores are scheduled to open next year in former department store spaces at King of Prussia Mall outside Philadelphia and at a Dallas mall known for its ice rink and glass vaulted ceiling.

White Flint, long Montgomery County's fanciest mall, would seem to be more Netflix's taste, but when I wandered by, it too was fenced off, its buildings leveled, leaving the 45-acre expanse looking like an African savanna. As its anchor stores died, White Flint (1977-2015) tried adding entertainment, hosting the region's first Dave & Buster's video game emporium. It didn't work.

Netflix's experience-oriented store is hardly a new concept. Disney was in malls with themed shops decades ago. Nor is Netflix starting from scratch with its "phygital" outlets. In Europe, the streamer stages a live symphony orchestra (playing the score from Netflix's "Life on Our Planet"). In Britain, the company is producing a stage play prequel to its sci-fi hit, "Stranger Things." And Netflix opened a "Stranger Things" shop in Las Vegas, featuring mock-ups of the sets — and merch, natch. The company tried a pop-up restaurant in Los Angeles last year; Netflix Bites offered pricey (and bad, critics say) food featured on the streamer's cooking shows.

Other formerly all-digital companies have nodded to the power of brick-and-mortar reality, from Amazon's failed bookstores to mall tenants such as Tesla and Warby Parker.

Thriving malls these days (they do exist!) often feature entertainment, such as escape rooms, ax-throwing outlets and casinos. My last stop was Westfield Montgomery, where the shuttered Sears anchor is labeled "Future Development" on the mall map. Still reasonably full — though I counted 28 empty slots in the 133-store mall — Montgomery offers experiences such as a flight simulator, kids' indoor gym and bowling alley.

Adding experiences takes malls back to their inventor's original concept. In 1956, Victor Gruen, envisioning more than a collection of stores, wanted malls to host schools, doctors' offices, even museums. In recent revival efforts, we're seeing motor vehicle bureaus, urgent care clinics and housing where Hecht's, Filene's and Marshall Field's once thrived.

Netflix has no such civic intent. It wants to make more money and deepen fans' ties to its productions. Which is fine, but their goal is not to bring back mall rats. It's to encourage people to go home and plunk ourselves back on the couch.

Dozens killed in past week amid scorching U.S. heat wave

Toll expected to rise with no letup expected in raft of record temperatures

BY ANNA PHILLIPS

A searing heat wave that has gripped much of the United States in recent days is suspected of killing at least 27 people in the last week, according to reports from state officials, medical examiners and news outlets.

The number, which is based on preliminary reports from California, Oregon and Arizona, is likely to grow as authorities assess the death toll of a heat wave that began last week, delivering record-breaking temperatures throughout the West and scorching East Coast cities. As of Wednesday, more than 135 million people across the Lower 48 were under heat alerts, many of which are expected to continue until the weekend.

Most of the deaths have been reported in California, where the heat broke daily records late last week in a handful of major cities, including San Jose, Fresno and Oakland. In Santa Clara County, which includes San Jose, Chief Medical Examiner Michelle Jordan said her office is investigating 14 cases where people appear to have died from heat-related causes.

Of those, Jordan said eight of the individuals who died were over the age of 65 and most were found in their homes. Two of the cases involved people who were homeless, and one person was living in transitional housing.

"What I do want to emphasize is these cases are still under investigation," Jordan said, adding that more a definitive death toll would probably take days or weeks to complete. At this point, the number of fatalities is not alarmingly high for the region, she said, "but obviously we're going to experience another heat wave that's going to last for the next three days."

Adding to California's death toll, on Saturday, a motorcyclist



DAVE KILLEN/THE OREGONIAN/AP

People use a misting tent Monday in downtown Portland, Ore. Oregon appears to have suffered a string of fatalities tied to heat as the state baked under triple-digit temperatures for days. Public health experts cautioned that official death tolls are most likely an undercount.

died of heat exposure in Death Valley National Park, where the temperature climbed to 128 degrees. Also that day, a woman incarcerated at the Central California Women's Facility died as temperatures in the Central valley, where the prison is located, reached 110 degrees. Although local authorities cast doubt on whether the woman's death was due to the heat wave, her daughter told the Sacramento Bee that she had complained of extreme heat inside the prison for years. On Sunday, a 58-year-old Sacramento man died of heat stroke after he was taken to a hospital from his un-air-conditioned home.

Oregon appears to have suffered a string of fatalities tied to

Deaths from heat in the United States have steadily increased, climbing to just over 2,300 in 2023. About 1,600 heat-related fatalities occurred in 2021, and there were about 1,700 in 2022.

heat as the state baked under triple-digit temperatures for days.

On Wednesday morning, an official with the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office said the heat was suspected in eight deaths, including six in the Portland, Ore., area. Most of the dead were elderly, but also among them were two 33-year-old men, one who died in Multnomah County and another in Coos County. The office did not provide information about the circumstances of their deaths or the dates when they occurred.

The medical examiner in Jackson County reported an additional suspected heat death, according to Jefferson Public Radio, bringing the number of victims in Oregon to nine.

In Arizona, NPR affiliate station KJZZ reported that a 4-month-old baby girl died on July 5 after becoming unresponsive while on a boat with her family on Lake Havasu. A spokesperson for the Mohave County Sheriff's Department told the station that the girl had suffered a heat-related illness.

Since July began, hundreds of heat records have been set in the United States, many in the West. Temperatures have been so high that some rescue helicopters have been unable to fly, since the air has become too thin for chopper blades to grab onto.

The heat waves have not spared the East Coast. Raleigh, N.C., hit an all-time high of 106 degrees on

Friday. In Maryland, the state's health department reported two deaths from heat-related causes during the week of June 30 to July 6.

The total number of deaths caused by the heat wave may remain unclear for a long time. And public health experts cautioned that official death tolls are most likely an undercount.

Although heat is the leading weather-driven cause of death in the United States — it kills more people than hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires combined — researchers, medical examiners and clinicians are still wrestling with how to accurately count the dead. Deaths from heat aren't always obvious; they are often missed, categorized instead as heart failure or other cardiovascular problems, even if heat was the trigger.

In several states where residents have boiled under extreme temperatures in recent days — including Washington state, North Carolina and South Carolina — officials said they had not received any information about heat-related deaths at this point. California's public health department could not provide a statewide estimate of suspected heat-related deaths by the time of publication.

Federal data shows that deaths from heat in the United States have steadily increased in recent years, climbing to just over 2,300 in 2023. About 1,600 heat-related fatalities occurred in 2021, and there were approximately 1,700 in 2022.

Ashley Ward, director of the Heat Policy Innovation Hub at Duke University, said there are signs that reporting and classification of these deaths is improving. In the past, she said, it was very hard to capture public interest in the dangers of heat. But that is beginning to change.

"The extreme nature of the heat last summer and this summer has meant it's in the forefront of everyone's mind, including those in charge of classifying health outcomes and deaths," Ward said. "Awareness plays a critical role in this equation."

New British government inherits worst economic plight since World War II

BY DAVID J. LYNCH

Britain's new Labour Party government is betting that an economic plan modeled on "Bidenomics" will reverse more than a decade of economic drift and boost stagnant living standards without requiring budget-busting spending.

It won't be easy. Like President Biden, Prime Minister Keir Starmer promises a more active government than his Conservative Party predecessor, as well as investments in green energy and industrial policies that promote domestic manufacturing.

But Starmer — who met Biden at the White House on Wednesday — inherited an economy showing the strains of more than a decade of political tumult, inadequate business investment and sclerotic government planning. He also lacks a ready source of cash.

The economic climate represents "the worst set of circumstances since the Second World War," Rachel Reeves, the country's first female chancellor of the exchequer, or finance minister, said Monday. Adjusted for inflation, wages are virtually unchanged since 2007, according to the Center for Economic Performance, a research institute. The average German is now 20 percent richer than the typical citizen of the United Kingdom.

"The U.K. is not in a quick-fix situation. Most people think it is going to take the best part of a decade to see material improvement come through," said David Page, head of macroeconomic research at AXA Investment Managers in London. "But I think there's also now a hope, and that's different, that you might see that emerge in the next 10 years."

Reeves moved quickly this week to underscore the urgency of the challenge, calling economic growth "our national mission" and saying that "there is no time to waste." But she has vowed to obey informal fiscal rules that will limit Labour's ability to spend freely, given the country's debt load. Her aim is to use modest amounts of public money to at-



STEFAN ROUSSEAU/POOL/REUTERS

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer talks to journalists as he flies to D.C. on Tuesday to attend a NATO summit. The economic playbook of his Labour Party government borrows from "Bidenomics."

tract private capital.

The roots of Britain's economic woes lie in weak productivity growth, economists said. Equipping workers to produce more goods each hour is the key to expanding the economy and raising living standards. And it is what has been missing from Britain's recent performance.

The typical American worker last year produced 23 percent more than their British counterpart. That gap had more than doubled since 2007. French and German workers also outperform the British.

British productivity rose steadily for nearly three decades but has flatlined since the 2008 financial crisis. The government austerity and recurring political crises that followed the Great Recession discouraged companies from investing to make workers more efficient, economists said.

In the United States, business investment has risen by more than one-third since 2016, almost seven times the increase in the United Kingdom, according to

government statistics.

"What does it mean? It means you're working with outdated equipment and less of it," said Rob Wood, chief U.K. economist for Pantheon Macroeconomics in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The pandemic — and government budget cuts that left the National Health Service understaffed — also took a toll on productivity. There are 754,000 more working-age people inactive now compared with before the pandemic, according to a House of Commons analysis. Many are among the more than 6 million Britons who are waiting to see a doctor, according to the British Medical Association.

Britain's problems are the legacy of years of interplay between public and private choices. The country's overly large financial services industry shrank following the 2008 crisis, which made credit harder to get than elsewhere.

The government met the crisis with an "age of austerity," which hurt public services and crimped economic growth.

"We've learned that public austerity destroyed the private sector as well. We need to invest," said David Blanchflower, an economics professor at Dartmouth College, who served on the Bank of England's monetary policy committee before the 2008 crisis.

Brexit — the 2016 decision to quit the European Union — and its implementation consumed three prime ministers over most of a decade and continues to shadow the economy.

Erecting commercial barriers against its largest trading partner will shrink the U.K. economy by 4 percent and will leave both exports and imports roughly 15 percent lower than if the country had remained in the E.U., according to the Office for Budget Responsibility, an official agency.

Government instability has been an impediment to growth. Since 2010, Britain has had five prime ministers, seven chancellors, nine cabinet ministers for business and countless long-term economic plans.

Last fall, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak canceled the second half of

a high-speed rail line intended to link London with northern cities. First proposed in 2009, the line — billed as Europe's largest infrastructure project — was to have connected the capital with Birmingham and Manchester, farther north.

But in October, Sunak eliminated the portion of the line from Birmingham to Manchester, leaving businesses that had planned on faster rail connections fuming.

"The sheer political and policy volatility [means] businesses don't know whether they are coming or going," Wood said.

Starmer's meeting with Biden on the sidelines of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit underscored the "special relationship" between the allies.

In a Washington speech last year, Reeves sketched an economic formula that resembled Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen's doctrine of "modern supply-side economics." The two share an enthusiasm for spurring growth by expanding the labor force and investing in infrastructure and climate-friendly energy sources.

Relative to the size of its economy, the U.S. public debt is a bit larger than that of the United Kingdom. But the dollar's status as the global reserve currency gives the U.S. government more latitude in dealing with its spending issues.

Labour has said it will abide by an informal fiscal rule developed by the previous U.K. government. That will require it within five years to start reducing debt as a percentage of gross domestic product, which is now set to reach 95 percent in 2026.

Labour also has ruled out increasing personal income taxes, the national insurance levy or the value-added tax.

Budgetary realities already have caused Labour to shrink its ambitions. In February, the party scrapped its pledge to spend 28 billion pounds, or roughly \$36 billion, each year on green energy programs. Instead, officials said annual spending would hit 4.7 billion pounds, or \$6 billion.

"Reality has kicked in," said Paul Dales, chief U.K. economist

for Capital Economics. "The new government has to focus on areas where actually they can make a difference without costing lots of money."

One such priority will be overhauling the notoriously slow planning process that governs housing and infrastructure projects. Labor wants to speed planning approvals to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years and to overhaul the energy grid.

The new government this week ended the Conservatives' ban on onshore wind farms. Instituted in 2015, it allowed a single objection to block projects.

Labour faces a daunting to-do list. But it may enjoy a short-term tailwind. Inflation in May was running at an annual rate of 2.8 percent, down from its peak near 10 percent in 2022. After a brief recession last year, growth is beginning to stir. The International Monetary Fund expects the economy to expand by 0.7 percent this year and accelerate to 1.5 percent in 2025.

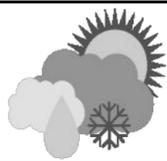
With inflation falling, the Bank of England could soon cut its 5.25 percent benchmark lending rate for the first time in four years, which would give the economy a boost.

If the new government can improve the nation's health service and return some inactive workers to the labor force, the economy would get a further lift.

Labour's massive parliamentary majority and the disarray in the ranks of the opposition Conservatives mean that Starmer can expect to remain in office for at least a full five-year Parliament, if not two.

That relative stability comes as other major economies are preoccupied with domestic politics. In France, the left-wing coalition that triumphed in parliamentary voting this month has endorsed free-spending policies that could unsettle financial markets. And the United States is in the midst of a divisive presidential contest, which could return an unpredictable former president to the White House.

"In an uncertain world," Reeves said on Monday, "Britain is a place to do business."



snow day or school day?

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8 a.m. 78°
Noon 86°
4 p.m. 90°
8 p.m. 87°

High today at approx. 5 p.m.
92°
Precip: 5%
Wind: W 7-14 mph

MARYLAND
Officials urge Congress to pass legislation covering the full cost of rebuilding Baltimore's Key Bridge. **B3**



OBITUARIES
Sprinter Brooks Johnson, 90, became a storied coach to student-athletes and Olympians. **B4**



OBITUARIES
James M. Inhofe, 89, was Oklahoma's longest-serving U.S. senator and a climate-change denier. **B4**

NATO deploys influencer Tony P

D.C. bachelor known for affable content is face of summit's welcome video

BY JOE HEIM

A singular question loomed over Washington this week as some of the globe's most powerful leaders gathered for NATO's 75th anniversary summit.

Why in the world was Tony P the face of the security organization's official welcome video?

The mild-mannered 25-year-old D.C. influencer, whose Instagram account promises "cooking, fashion, and adulting tips," was probably not on anyone's shortlist — or long, long list — to drop a one-minute video explaining how Washington was the birthplace of NATO and that its 32 member states are working "on the most important security challenges facing our world today, continuing to boost NATO's ability to keep our 1 billion people safe."

A Reddit user was not impressed. "Like what was the point of this?" they wrote. "Is this the only spokesperson DC could find? With all the unemployed international policy folks, this is who we use to do this work?"

A poster on X was puzzled as well, saying, "career diplomats being ousted for a media job by a 25 year old bachelor in dc. what in the world?"

To be fair, even Tony P, a.k.a. Anthony Polcari, was surprised.

"They want to work with me? Like, an influencer guy? I couldn't believe it," Polcari said in a phone interview Wednesday. "Really, just — I'm blown away by it. And, you know, any way I can help was just really cool for me."

Polcari, who said he wasn't paid for the video, is one of several dozen social media influencers invited by NATO, the Defense Department and the State Department to be a part of the high-level summit. As the alliance faces growing questions about its future, it wants to better explain its mission and bolster its image with young people who may have only a vague understanding of why it was formed.

Polcari said NATO reached out to his agent a few weeks ago. After

SEE TONY P ON B3



MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Seven dead as extreme heat grips region

This article is by Kyle Swenson, Emma Uber, Katie Shepherd, Gregory S. Schneider, Jordan D. Brown and Tamilore Oshikanlu

Seven people have died as a result of heat in the Washington region, authorities confirmed Wednesday, as blistering temperatures have forced elected officials to cancel public events, close down athletic fields and encourage residents to stay indoors.

Heat indexes have surpassed 100 degrees over a string of consecutive days this week, prompting the National Weather Service to issue heat alerts for the region on three straight days. The heat is predicted to ease somewhat Thursday and Friday before ramping back up over the weekend and next week, setting up another uncomfortable stretch during the region's second-hottest start to the summer on record, according to the Capital Weather Gang.

In the Washington region, the concern running under the steady drumbeat of public warnings and proclamations is that

Residents urged to limit outdoor activities amid second-hottest start to summer on record

this week's weather may result in more heat-related illness and potential deaths.

"We are encouraging residents to stay hydrated and limit outdoor activities as much as possible," Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks (D) said Friday. "It is also important to check on your family members, friends and neighbors, especially senior citizens, families with young children, people with special needs, or individuals living alone during periods of extreme heat."

In Maryland, six people died of heat-related illnesses, and four of the victims were in Prince George's, according to the Maryland Health Department's weekly Heat-Related Illness Surveillance Report. Two of

the deceased were between 45 and 64 years old, while two were older than 65. The two additional deaths were in Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City. The first death occurred in May, and the number of deaths increased in late June.

According to Maryland's data, nine people died because of heat in 2023.

In Montgomery County, officials said county-run libraries, swimming pools, recreation centers and senior centers would remain open during normal operating hours to serve as places to cool off during the day.

The county's Department of Transportation will also provide free bottled water on some buses for customers using the Ride On, ExtRa, Flex and Flash bus systems. Homeless shelters will also remain open at all hours.

One resident sweating through these uncomfortable days has been Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich (D), who has been without air conditioning in his home

SEE HEAT ON B2

Santos Tejada cools off at Georgetown Waterfront Park on Tuesday. Heat indexes have risen above 100 degrees over consecutive days this week, prompting the National Weather Service to issue multiple heat alerts for the area.

A dream in green along the Potomac

Urban planners are circulating a design that would connect the Kennedy Center to the National Mall

BY CLARENCE WILLIAMS

For decades, urban planners have envisioned rolling parkland that sweeps across the expanse from the Kennedy Center to the Lincoln Memorial, along the western edge of the nation's capital.

Families would spread picnic blankets across the grassy knolls as bikers safely pedaled down paths devoid of cars. Constitution Avenue and E Street would extend into more grand boulevards, connecting the nation's memorials to tree-lined city blocks with sidewalk cafes in Foggy Bottom and the West End.

For the past 18 months, planners from the National Capital Planning Commission, District government and the private sector have been working on putting such visions to paper and are circulating a conceptual design to ignite discussion in hope of making such ideas come to fruition. A key goal would be to expand the National Mall to the northwest, using the Kennedy Center as a western anchor.

Last month, the planning commission presented the idea to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, one of several entities needed for buy-in for such a monumental move. The plan would be



IMAGES BY PERKINS EASTMAN/NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Urban planners' conceptual redesign of the western entrance to the nation's capital between the Kennedy Center and the National Mall features grassy expanses and paths devoid of cars.

to "deck over" the current transportation infrastructure network to create more green space and "reclaim" the area's natural

beauty, said Matthew Flis, senior urban designer with the National Capital Planning Commission.

"This urban design concept

was a way to put some more ideas on a plan ... to show that there is a better way for this part

SEE PARKLAND ON B6

Three men convicted in 2020 killing of D.C. teen

Authorities say shooters targeted 13-year-old's Shaw neighborhood

BY KEITH L. ALEXANDER

A D.C. Superior Court jury late Wednesday convicted three men of first-degree murder and other charges in a series of shootings that injured 10 people and culminated in the killing of a 13-year-old, who was walking to play basketball with a group of friends in the Shaw neighborhood of Northwest Washington.

The brazen Sunday afternoon shooting of Malachi Lukes, a Cardozo Education Campus student, gripped the nation's capital as authorities determined the shooters — members of a neighborhood street gang — only targeted Malachi and his friends because they lived in the area. The crew, authorities said, was seeking vengeance against anyone from the neighborhood on behalf of a fellow gang member who was fatally shot a year earlier.

During the four-month trial, prosecutors tied Malachi's mur-

der to a turf war, saying members of a neighborhood crew shot at the youngster and his friends because they happened to be walking where the crew's rivals were known to gather. The bullet that claimed Malachi's life pierced his neck four days before his 14th birthday. One of his friends was shot in the leg.

In all, prosecutors charged the three men in nearly a dozen other shootings between Feb. 18 through March 1, 2020, when Malachi was killed. The jury spent nearly five weeks deliberating before convicting Tyion Freeman, 24, of Northwest Washington; Koran Jackson, 23, of Southeast Washington and Stephen Nelson, 33, of Hyattsville. Federal prosecutors cast the string of shootings as retaliation for the 2019 shooting death of 19-year-old Tahlil Byrd near the Shaw Metro station, not far from where Malachi was killed.

"These men were hunting. They were looking for enemies. And they found them, in a 13-year-old," Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Jackson said in her closing arguments weeks earlier. "A 13-year-old that posed no threat to these grown men."

Defense lawyers for the men

SEE TRIAL ON B3

Woman killed by falling branch

DEATH IN POPULAR PARK STUNS LOCALS

Officials will remove tree, reinspect others nearby

BY MICHAEL BRICE-SADDLER AND MEAGAN FLYNN

A woman was killed Wednesday morning after being struck by a large tree limb that fell in a Southeast Washington park, officials said Wednesday, devastating neighbors — some of whom say they've raised concerns for years about the park's trees.

Vito Maggiolo, a spokesperson for the D.C. fire department, said emergency personnel were called at about 7:30 a.m. to Garfield Park, where they found the tree limb on top of a woman.

"We had to cut through large branches to get to the patient. When we got to them, it was quickly determined that she was deceased," Maggiolo said.

The limb lay at the foot of the massive tree, its leafy branches mangled. By 11 a.m., a tree-cutting crew arrived to begin dismantling the more than 100-year-old swamp white oak, taking chain saws to its canopy and tossing its branches into a wood chipper.

D.C. Council member Charles Allen (D-Ward 6) said he had been briefed by leaders with the city's Parks and Recreation Department and Transportation Department (DDOT). Allen said DDOT, which has an Urban Forestry Division, inspects large trees every three years; he was told Wednesday that this tree was inspected a little less than two years ago and was found to be in good health.

"What they're telling me is there's no indication of a sick and damaged tree," he said. "They had even done some trimming two years ago."

The victim, a woman in her 30s, was a resident of the community, Allen said; he was told she was walking her dog when the incident occurred. Additional information about the victim was not available. After an initial investigation, DDOT officials had

SEE TREE ON B2

Local officials brace for drought, further health effects as temperatures soar

HEAT FROM B1

for almost four weeks while he waits on a replacement part.

"There's nothing like having a house at about 90 degrees at bedtime," he said with a smirk from inside his office at the start of a news conference Wednesday. "It's delightful."

He urged people who need to escape the heat to visit a county library, pool, senior center or recreation center to cool off.

"We've been asking people to please be careful," he said.

In Virginia, the state's Department of Health confirmed that there had been one recent heat-related death but had no further details. The agency reported that 1,681 people visited hospital emergency rooms or urgent-care clinics for heat-related illnesses from May 1 through Tuesday, a more than 115 percent increase compared with last year.

Heat-related emergencies peaked Saturday, when 111 people visited Virginia emergency departments, but Tuesday was a close second with 105 incidents, according to agency data.

Christian Martinez, a spokesman for Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R), said the governor is monitoring the situation statewide.

"Governor Youngkin continues to engage across multiple secretariats and state agencies actively collaborating with our federal and local partners to assess conditions and provide guidance to Virginians, enabling local governments and families to implement appropriate measures to ensure the safety of Virginians across the Commonwealth," Martinez said in a written statement.

Virginia is also bracing for a



Roofers contend with high temperatures as they work atop a home Wednesday in Hagerstown, Md. The heat is forecast to ease somewhat Thursday and Friday before ramping back up over the weekend.

RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST

"We are encouraging residents to stay hydrated and limit outdoor activities as much as possible"

Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks

potential drought. Last month, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality issued a drought warning for the Northern Virginia region — including the counties of Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Arlington and Fairfax — as well as for seven counties in the Shenandoah region.

The warning means that a sig-

nificant heat-related drought is "imminent," according to the advisory.

The Virginia Drought Monitoring Task Force, which consists of state and federal officials in environmental quality, weather, agriculture and health, found that stream flows were at or below 25 percent of normal levels in

every region of the state, while groundwater levels were declining in the northern, central and eastern regions. Water levels were extremely low — below 5 percent of normal — in Northern Virginia, Shenandoah, Roanoke, the New River in the southwest and the York-James River area of the peninsula.

Reservoir levels were normal, but the department said it was working on drought-response plans with officials around the state. The announcement encouraged residents to "protect water supplies by minimizing water use, monitoring drought conditions and detecting and repairing

leaks."

Weedon Cloe, a drought expert at Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality, said this year's heat and drought-like conditions are somewhat earlier than last year's "but not outside the range of observations over the years."

To ease the drought, "we really just need some rain to fall to alleviate the soil moisture deficits, to recharge the groundwater, and to put some water flow back in the streams and fields, particularly for farmers in the Shenandoah Valley area," Cloe said.

In the District, no heat-related deaths have been reported so far, according to a spokesperson from DC Health.

The city is hosting leaders from around the globe for the NATO summit this week, and police are already working extended 12-hour shifts through the end of this week to maintain road closures and security measures tied to the event, according to D.C. police spokesman Tom Lynch. However, he says, the heat has not caused the department to cancel any events or change its posture.

"We are taking great care to get water and cooling opportunities to our officers, particularly those standing on posts surrounding the [NATO] summit. But other than that, our stance remains steady," Lynch wrote in a text message.

Downtown, people hurried into buildings with a sigh of relief as they felt the cool burst of air conditioning inside. Many fanned themselves profusely, seeking any sliver of shade for protection from the sun.

Near the White House, Secret Service members stood behind the tall black fences lining 15th Street NW, wiping sweat from their brows and tugging at their heavy

vests. The street vendors who had been hawking water and ice cream since early that morning sought shelter under the scaffolding of a nearby building under construction.

Some workers, however, had little choice but to brave the heat. George Brown, a 50-year-old postal worker, remained positive. Even at the peak of the day at 12:30 p.m., Brown said, he tried to focus on the little moments that make his day more pleasant, such as enjoying a rare "nice breeze" during what he described as a pretty hot day even for him.

As sweat dripped, Brown, who has worked in the Postal Service for over 30 years, brushed off the heat, saying it's important not to "overthink it, where you're like, 'Oh, God, it's so hot.'"

Brief relief arrived just before 3 p.m. as clouds covered the blazing sun for a few moments, and drops of rain fell.

The humidity, however, continued to pound construction crews at work Wednesday afternoon outside the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

Jose Hernandez, 54, said he and the crew managed the heat by drinking lots of water and Gatorade.

The crew will occasionally cut back its hours on hot days, Hernandez said. But Wednesday was not one of those days. They had been out on 13th and H streets NW since 6 a.m.

"Today's not too bad," Hernandez said. On hot days like this, Hernandez said, sometimes "you have to do whatever you have to do."

Jenny Gathright, Lateshia Beachum, Jasmine Hilton and Jason Samenow contributed to this report.

Falling branch kills woman in D.C. park, reigniting concerns about tree safety

TREE FROM B1

still not determined what caused the tree to collapse by late Wednesday afternoon.

"Through our Urban Forestry Division, the District maintains a comprehensive process for the routine inspection and maintenance of all public space trees," acting DDOT Director Sharon Kershbaum said in a statement. "This tree was inspected in May 2022 and determined to be in good condition. Following today's accident, the tree will be immediately removed from Garfield Park and we will reinspect all mature trees in the park by the end of the week. We encourage the public to report any tree concerns to 311. We extend our deepest condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones impacted by this tragic loss."

The vibrant, highly trafficked park is a favorite among neighbors for morning walks and for its tennis courts. Nearby children, including those from Capitol Hill Day School, which sits directly across the street, frequently enjoy its playground, Allen said.

"My understanding is that this was an absolutely horrific tragedy," he added. "This will hit home for a lot of people because of how many people use this park every day. For this woman's friends and family, it's absolutely devastating."

Some neighbors and frequenters of the park on Wednesday told The Washington Post they long had concerns about trees in Garfield Park — including the tree that snapped.

Muhammad Sinjar, who lives on First Street near the park, said he walked through Garfield almost every day to go to the gym. As he passed by Wednesday morning, he looked agape at the scene: "I walk here. Our kids play here," he said.

Another neighbor showed complaints to a reporter that she submitted through 311, worried about "dead tree limbs" on several of the trees — including some on the other side of the tree that snapped Wednesday — that she worried could fall on her daughters, who play soccer there. In May 2022, a city official wrote back saying that "the mammoth oak will be pruned on a routine (inside 9-month) timeframe."

In another tree complaint in 2021, the neighbor wrote that the wait seemed too long. "My concern is that waiting up to 9 months to remove potentially dangerous tree limbs could mean someone could get hurt in the



MEAGAN FLYNN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Work crews clear the area where a fallen tree limb killed a woman at Garfield Park in Southeast Washington on Wednesday morning. The D.C. Department of Transportation said that the tree had last been inspected in 2022 and that its experts would remove the tree from the park and open it to see if something was wrong inside.

interim," she wrote to city officials.

While DDOT noted it last inspected this specific tree in 2022, the oak also got some care last fall ahead of the North American Tree Climbing Championship, which was held in Garfield Park in October. Jeff Inman, an arborist in Richmond who won the climbing competition, said a volunteer crew examined and performed maintenance on the trees ahead of the competition, to make sure they were safe for climbing.

He remembered climbing this tree, he said, and didn't recall noticing anything troublesome about it, though he noted climbers were not using the limb that fell Wednesday. When trees fall or snap, it can be difficult to diagnose what caused it, he said.

"That's the thing with trees as a whole ... we can't see into them. They do a fantastic job of trying to seal over old wounds."

Jeff Inman, a risk manager at True Timber Arborists

Sometimes, with trees as old and tall as those in Garfield Park, he said, a limb can grow too heavy for the tree to support any longer. Sometimes there are signs and sometimes there is no warning at

all, he said.

"That's the thing with trees as a whole — what I tend to tell people who don't know as much about trees, is that we can't see into them," said Inman, a risk manager at True Timber Arborists. "They do a fantastic job of trying to seal over old wounds. Their entire role in life is to get as big as possible and live for as long as they can, and the unfortunate thing is because we can't see inside them, we don't often know the structural integrity of these trees."

DDOT said that its experts planned to open up the tree and try to see if something was wrong on the inside.

Wednesday was not the first time a falling tree limb in Garfield Park caused serious harm. In

2011, a man, a teenager and three children playing in the park were injured after a "tree-size" branch from a large oak tree fell on top of the group in what was described as a "freak accident."

As they watched crews chop down the remainder of the tree Wednesday morning in the park, Michael and Norris Jones couldn't believe what happened. The brothers said they grew up playing in this park in the 1950s and '60s, and on Wednesday morning, upon seeing news of the young woman's death, they decided to come back.

They recognized the tree that fell, as well as many others. "They're the same as when we came up," said Norris Jones. "Just older."

The park looked different then

— a lot better, they remembered, before the interstate tore it in half. They played baseball and football here. There was a sandbox and swimming pool, and every August, for 50 years, they held a family reunion in Garfield.

"Probably about 10 years ago, I noticed this tree — it looked like something was wrong with it. It looked like it was leaning, hanging too much," Norris Jones recalled.

Seeing the news of the tree limb's collapse earlier that morning, Michael Jones said, made him sad for the young woman and her family.

"It was just devastating to find out," he said. "You're just out walking your dog and all of a sudden a big tree branch is falling down on you."



The Guide to Offers
The Washington Post

Enter for the chance to win a pair of tickets to O.A.R. Summer Tour '24 with special guest Fitz and the Tantrums

O.A.R. might just be music's biggest, best-kept secret. The platinum-certified Rockville, MD band has quietly sold-out Madison Square Garden, filled Red Rocks Amphitheater, earned platinum and gold plaques, lit up the Times Square New Year's Eve celebration and built one of the most committed fanbases in the world. The group — Marc Roberge (lead vocals and guitar), Richard On (lead guitar and backing vocals), Chris Culos (drums), Benj Gersham (bass) and Jerry DePizzo (saxophone, guitar and backing vocals) accompanied by Mikel Paris (keys, backing vocals and percussion) and Jon Lampley (trumpet and backing vocals) — have entered a new chapter as a band by releasing 10th studio album *The Arcade*, "a beautiful collision of organic instruments, modern production and thought-provoking lyrics..." (victrola.com).

See details at [washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388)



MARYLAND

State officials urge Congress to cover full costs of rebuilding Key Bridge

BY MICHAEL LARIS

Maryland officials on Wednesday urged Congress to pass legislation covering the full cost of rebuilding Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge, telling senators that such certainty will help speed construction of a vital East Coast connector.

Their appeals came as the top Republican on the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee, Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), raised questions about whether it is "equitable" for Congress to guarantee Maryland 100 percent reimbursement when many other states only have 80 or 90 percent of their emergency costs covered.

Capito probed the state's ability to pay the additional funds on its own, noting that the new Key Bridge will again be tolled, providing a revenue stream. She also pressed Shailen Bhatt, who heads the Federal Highway Administration, on what standard determines which states get reimbursed at which rates.

"I think it is [the] scope and scale of a disaster that would ... overwhelm state and local agencies' ability to respond," Bhatt said.

The exchanges underscored the complexities of President Biden's pledge, 10 days after the bridge was destroyed by an er-

rant container ship on March 26, that he intended to have "the federal government cover the cost of rebuilding this entire bridge — all of it."

Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) argued that "it has been a tradition in the United States of America of providing 100 percent support for states that have undergone this kind of tragedy." Van Hollen, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, added that "we have been there for other states during their times of need, and we really hope every state represented in the Senate will be with us right now."

Maryland's other Democratic senator, Ben Cardin, noted that the federal government fully covered rebuilding costs under an emergency Transportation Department program after Interstate 35W collapsed in Minneapolis in 2007 and after Hurricane Irma hit Florida in 2017.

Last month, the Biden administration asked Congress to give an additional \$3.1 billion to a U.S. Transportation Department program that funds emergency projects such as the Key Bridge replacement. Capito said the program is currently "drastically short of the funding necessary" for the 130 eligible events in 38 states and territories. Separately, Cardin and members of



A view of the Francis Scott Key Bridge disaster site in Baltimore on March 26, when the container ship Dali destroyed the span. State officials estimate rebuilding it will cost \$1.7 billion to \$1.9 billion.

Congress representing Maryland on both sides of the aisle have introduced legislation providing for 100 percent of the funding for the new bridge.

State officials have estimated the span, which they want open

by October 2028, will cost between \$1.7 billion and \$1.9 billion.

Cardin said the federal government will be reimbursed using funds Maryland receives from insurance on the bridge

and any damages from the firms responsible for the container ship Dali.

"There is at least very serious evidence that there could be wrongdoing in the manner in which the vessel was handled,

which could bring in substantial funds," Cardin said.

A lawyer representing the ship's owner, Grace Ocean Private Ltd., and its operator, Synergy Marine, declined to comment. The companies have moved in court to sharply limit their potential liability.

Cardin said that including the \$350 million in insurance on the bridge, the amount the federal government will eventually get back "will far exceed the 10 percent" in additional funding Maryland is seeking.

The bridge money is a top priority for the state, which saw the Baltimore region take an economic hit of about \$1.2 billion following the disaster.

Last week, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore (D) said that during the previous week he had "personally met with over 100 leaders in the White House and on Capitol Hill to talk about the way forward," working to build a bipartisan consensus for full funding.

"Our focus on getting this done is not about nostalgia. It's about necessity," Moore said last week, adding that the original span was "absolutely essential for the full, complete operations for the Port of Baltimore to exist, because so many materials actually needed the bridge" to reach the port.

Influencer Tony P shrugs off naysayers after his star turn for NATO summit

TONY P FROM B1

he got over the shock of the request, he read the short script and jumped on board. The video was filmed on a blazing hot June day in front of various Washington landmarks as Polcari, boiling in a dark blue suit, delivered his lines without letting anyone see

him sweat.

He thinks he may have been asked because he has become a more visible face in the District as his Instagram following — where he chronicles his bachelor life in aggressively inoffensive videos — has swelled from about 2,000 people a year or so ago to more than 200,000.

"They wanted someone who could showcase D.C., who was an influencer, you know, in the D.C. space," Polcari said. As if on cue, a woman in the background could be heard yelling out, "Tony P!"

But not all of his Instagram followers were pleased with his new tie to NATO.

"I hate this so much," one

wrote. Another posted a vomit emoji.

On X there were more jabs: "God, this is embarrassing. You got to be kidding me..."

"Congratulations! This is the worst thing I've ever seen!"

"D.C. really needs better local celebrities."

Polcari shrugs off the naysay-

ers.

"There's some people saying that I'm one of those hated influencers in D.C. That's just not true," Polcari said. "It's funny, the fact that people will take time out of their day to crap on me for doing a NATO video made me kind of laugh. Because I use the old line from the show 'Mad

Men': 'I'm not thinking about you, but you're thinking about me.'"

Negativity has no place in Tony P's world.

"I want to create a space for fun and positivity where people can come together," he texted after the interview.

Just like NATO.

3 found guilty in killing of 13-year-old

TRIAL FROM B1

asserted that prosecutors had no DNA, eyewitnesses or video evidence tying their clients to the shootings; prosecutors argued that an avalanche of text messages leading up to and following the shooting, as well as video surveillance footage, identified the men as responsible.

Jurors listened to more than 100 witnesses and viewed more than 1,000 pieces of evidence at trial before evaluating the more than 40 charges, including first-degree murder, conspiracy, gang and weapons counts.

Seated next to their attorneys Wednesday, none of the men showed reactions as the guilty verdicts were read. The men face a maximum sentence of life in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for September.

Freeman's attorney told Judge Rainey Brandt that his client wants to be sentenced under the District's Youth Rehabilitation Act, a controversial city law that gives individuals 25 years of age or younger at the time of their crime a chance to receive a lighter sentence and have their criminal records sealed should they successfully complete probation.

During the trial, prosecutors alleged that Freeman shot at the group from the back seat of a stolen silver Kia Soul with two other shooters in the vehicle. Koran Jackson, prosecutors argued, was the driver. Prosecutors said Nelson helped provide the weapons and then disposed of them after the shooting that killed Lukes. He was not there that day, prosecutors said, but he faces a potential life sentence.

During closing arguments, Malachi's mother, Melissa Laws, sat in the second row of the courtroom, tears streaming down her face as prosecutors played body-camera footage that showed officers trying to revive the youth as he lay in an alley off the 600 block of S Street NW. None of Malachi's friends were able to identify the shooters, telling detectives that a car sped by them and began firing.

On the first day of the trial, Laws told the jury she named her youngest child after the last book of the Old Testament as a symbol of a new beginning in



Friends and family gather at a memorial service and vigil for Malachi Lukes, 13, at the Shaw Community Center in D.C. on March 5, 2020, the day he would have turned 14. Authorities said Malachi and his friends were targeted by members of a neighborhood street gang because they were walking where the crew's rivals were known to gather.

her life. He had scored high on his eighth-grade placement test and had a summer job lined up, helping film a segment for Real News Camp, a social justice program produced at the Shaw Community Center. Months before the shooting, Malachi appeared in the role of the lion in a production called the "Wizard of Shaw," a play about the influence of go-go music.

Prosecutors said they linked the men to the shootings through cellphone location data, text messages in which they discussed purchasing and disposing of the firearms, social media posts, and rap lyrics that prosecutors said referred to the shooting.

Prosecutor Michelle Jackson repeatedly referred to Freeman as the "recording secretary" of the group, showing the jury numerous text messages between Freeman and the other men that prosecutors said detailed the men's decision to collaborate on the shooting. Prosecutors showed videos of the men before and after the shooting that they said revealed the distinctive clothes and sneakers the men were wearing before the shoot-

ing, at the time of the shooting and afterward.

Lawyers clashed over the interpretation of physical evidence presented at trial, which prosecutors cast as conclusive and the defense said was flimsy and circumstantial.

Surveillance footage of the shooting was too grainy to identify Freeman, argued his lawyer, Andrew Ain, who said Freeman was not there at the time.

DNA on the steering wheel was linked to co-defendant Koran Jackson, prosecutors argued. But his attorney, Brian K. McDaniel, said the DNA found inside the vehicle only proved that his client was in the vehicle at some point. He argued that his client was not in the vehicle at the time of the shooting.

McDaniel said witnesses did not identify his client as being part of the shooting. But prosecutors said that was because the witnesses identified individuals who got out of the car to shoot. As the driver, Koran Jackson stayed inside the vehicle, they said. While McDaniel acknowledged that Jackson did collect weapons, he said that was because Jackson felt he needed



Malachi, right, was named after the last book of the Old Testament as a symbol of a new beginning, his mother said.

protection in a high-crime area.

Prosecutors also charged two other men, Reginald L. Steele and Aaron Dequan Brown, in the shootings. During the current trial, defense lawyers pushed back on prosecutors' attempts to present the defendants as equally culpable in Malachi's death, pointing to evidence that they said tied the crimes to Steele, not their clients.

In a brief interview, Steele's attorney, Megan Allburn, declined to comment on the other defense attorney's assertions. Both Steele and Brown are incarcerated at the D.C. jail, awaiting a trial date to be set.

As the foreman for the jury of five men and seven women read the guilty verdicts, Laws bent over in her seat with her head in her hands, wiping away tears as another family member rubbed her back.

Outside the courtroom, she hugged and thanked one of the lead D.C. homicide detectives on her son's case.

"I feel so relieved," Laws said. "I feel justice has been served, not just for my son, but for his friends as well."

OBITUARIES

JAMES M. INHOFE, 89

Long-tenured senator from Okla. was outspoken denier of climate change

BY EMILY LANGER

James M. Inhofe, an Oklahoma Republican who served for nearly 30 years in the U.S. Senate, where he chaired the Armed Services and Environment committees and became known as the Capitol's most outspoken denier of climate change, died July 9 at 89.

He had recently suffered a stroke, the Associated Press reported, citing a statement from his family. Other details were not immediately available.

Mr. Inhofe retired from the Senate in January 2023 after nearly six decades in politics, a career that began with stints as a state legislator and as mayor of Tulsa, Oklahoma's second-largest city.

He served for nearly eight years in the U.S. House of Representatives before winning election to the U.S. Senate in 1994. Mr. Inhofe became his state's longest-serving member of the chamber and a "rock-ribbed and senior figure in the Republican Party," said Norman J. Ornstein, a congressional scholar and senior fellow emeritus at the American Enterprise Institute.

Mr. Inhofe was a reliable supporter of conservative causes, including opposition to abortion rights and same-sex marriage, and an effective champion of regulatory policies benefiting his oil-rich state.

On the Armed Services Committee, which he led following the 2018 death of Sen. John S. McCain (R-Ariz.), he argued forcefully for robust military spending.

But he was best known for his sometimes combative objection to the scientific consensus surrounding human-caused climate change.

"With all of the hysteria, all of the fear, all of the phony science, could it be that man-made global warming is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people?" Mr. Inhofe said in a 2003 speech on the Senate floor. "It sure sounds like it."

A self-described "one-man truth squad" on the subject, Mr. Inhofe published a 2012 book



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

called "The Greatest Hoax: How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future."

He argued that only God could change the climate, writing that "God is still up there, and He promised to maintain the seasons and that cold and heat would never cease as long as the earth remains." It was arrogant of human beings to suppose otherwise, Mr. Inhofe contended.

In the winter of 2015, while serving as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Mr. Inhofe brought a snowball onto the Senate floor in an attempt to disprove global warming. "It's very, very cold out. Very unseasonable," he said, before tossing the snowball to the sitting Senate president.

(While temperatures in Washington were cold that winter, the D.C. region has warmed by more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit in the past century because of human-caused climate change, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.)

During an earlier snowstorm



2008 PHOTO BY SUE OGROCKI/AP

TOP: Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), seen in 2015 at the Capitol, was a reliable supporter of conservative causes and an effective champion of regulatory policies benefiting his oil-rich state.

ABOVE: Mr. Inhofe was his state's longest-serving U.S. senator.

in Washington, in 2010, Mr. Inhofe and his grandchildren built an igloo and erected a sign reading "Al Gore's New Home," a reference to the former vice president, who shared the 2007

Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to combat climate change.

Mr. Inhofe's influence in Washington increased during the presidency of Donald Trump, whom Mr. Inhofe sup-

ported, and who filled key appointments with administrators who shared Mr. Inhofe's commitment to environmental deregulation. He once characterized the EPA as a "Gestapo bureaucracy."

Scott Pruitt, a protégé of Mr. Inhofe's who served as Oklahoma attorney general, became Trump's first EPA administrator before resigning amid an ethics scandal in 2018. Pruitt's successor, Andrew Wheeler, who led the agency through the end of the Trump administration, had worked for Mr. Inhofe on the Senate Environment Committee.

In 2021, Mr. Inhofe bucked Trump and the president's loyalists by voting to certify Joe Biden's victory in the presidential election, which Trump had sought to overturn. Any other action, Mr. Inhofe said of his vote at the time, would have been "a violation of my oath of office."

James Mountain Inhofe was born in Des Moines on Nov. 17, 1934, and grew up in Tulsa.

He served in the Army before following his father into the insurance industry — Mr. Inhofe eventually became president of Quaker Life Insurance Co. — and venturing into real estate development. His move into politics was partly motivated by his frustration over government regulations.

Mr. Inhofe was elected in 1966 to the Oklahoma House of Representatives and two years later to the Oklahoma Senate. He completed his college education during his time in the legislature, receiving a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Tulsa in 1973, the year he turned 39.

After his tenure in the state senate, Mr. Inhofe served as mayor of Tulsa from 1978 to 1984. He lost races for governor and Congress before he was elected to the U.S. House in 1986.

Eight years later, Mr. Inhofe defeated Rep. Dave McCurdy (D-Okla.) in a special election to fill the Senate seat left vacant by David L. Boren, a Democrat who resigned to become president of

the University of Oklahoma. Mr. Inhofe went on to win his first full Senate term in 1996 and was reelected four times before he stepped down at age 88.

Mr. Inhofe was a licensed pilot and routinely flew himself to and from Washington. In 1991, he joined three other aviators in flying a Cessna around the world in honor of Wiley Post, an Oklahoman who had completed a record-breaking flight around the globe 60 years earlier.

In 2010, Mr. Inhofe landed his aircraft at a rural airport in South Texas on a runway that was marked as closed, and where construction workers were on the job. He agreed to undertake remedial training in lieu of punishment.

For a campaign ad in 2020, when he was 85, Mr. Inhofe flew a plane upside down in a demonstration of his prowess in the air.

Mr. Inhofe's survivors include his wife, the former Kay Kirkpatrick, whom he married in 1959, and three children, Molly, Jimmy and Katy. His son Perry, who was also an aviator, died in 2013 when the private plane he was flying crashed near Owasso, Okla.

Despite his conservative positions and pugnacious rhetoric, Mr. Inhofe by all accounts had strong working relationships and friendships with many Democrats on the Hill.

"I've had a lot of people tell me, 'Inhofe, I don't agree with you on everything, but I know where you stand,'" he once told the Tulsa World.

Former U.S. senator Barbara Boxer, his Democratic counterpart on the Environment Committee, told The Washington Post in 2015 that she regarded his views on climate change as "dangerous" and "waaaaay out of the mainstream," but she said she regarded the two of them as siblings with different worldviews. During congressional hearings, Mr. Inhofe sometimes wore a tie depicting a polar bear, a gift from Boxer.

Maxine Joselow contributed to this report.

BROOKS JOHNSON, 90

Sprinter became a storied coach of student-athletes and Olympic medalists

BY BRIAN MURPHY

Brooks Johnson, a onetime star sprinter who tied a 60-yard world record even as he began a coaching career that spanned six decades, from D.C. prep school runners to Olympic medalists, as one of the sport's most storied trainers, died June 29 at his home in Windermere, Fla. He was 90.

The cause was cancer, said his wife, Elizabeth Riccardi.

Mr. Johnson's influence on American track moved from the era of cinder tracks and stopwatches to the sweeping investigations of doping in the early 2000s. In the aftermath, Mr. Johnson was among the coaches tasked with rebuilding the sport's image — even though his mercurial reputation made him a polarizing figure at times.

Mr. Johnson also represented a bridge to the civil rights battles of the 1960s and how some Black athletes and coaches took a stand, including participating in boycott movements and other actions.

In June 1965, Mr. Johnson arranged a meeting with the headmaster of St. Albans School, an all-boys academy in Washington where Mr. Johnson had volunteered to assist the track coach. He was working as a community organizer in Washington after making headlines on sports pages for years in other cities — including tying the indoor 60-yard world record at 6.0 seconds in 1961 and helping coach an Olympic medal winner, Willie May, who took silver in the 110-meter hurdles in 1960 in Rome.

With the headmaster at St. Albans, Mr. Johnson questioned why the school was nearly all White in a city with a large Black population. The headmaster, Charles Martin, replied with a challenge: Come up with a solution and get back to me, he told Mr. Johnson, according to school accounts.

Mr. Johnson offered to stay. Beginning in the fall of 1965, he taught American history and anthropology, and later launched a program to recruit more minority students. He eventually be-



PHELAN M. EBENHACK FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Coach Brooks Johnson, left, chats with hurdling star David Oliver, who won bronze at the 2008 Olympics, in Florida in 2011.

came head coach of the track and field team, leading the squad until 1975 and then moving to college coaching in Florida and California.

Among the students who passed through Mr. Johnson's team at St. Albans was discus thrower Al Gore. ("He wasn't the greatest natural athlete," Mr. Johnson once said of the future vice president, "but he was extremely coachable.")

At St. Albans, Mr. Johnson's coaching style also began to take shape: always demanding, sometimes browbeating and deeply idiosyncratic. He could tear into athletes with a blast of invectives and then, moments later, sit down to analyze performance details such as stride length and ground-contact time.

He had sprinters and hurdlers listen to jazz, seeking to infuse the music's pulse and verve into their races. "I tell them this is a benevolent dictatorship," Mr. Johnson said of his approach. "This is not a free-for-all."

Some athletes couldn't tolerate Mr. Johnson's volatility. Many more, however, regarded him as innovative and indispensable as he helped mold hundreds of world-class runners for Olympic Games and championships.

When Mr. Johnson took on

David Oliver, a former Howard University sprinter, he put him through a grueling initial workout. It was a kind of loyalty test by Mr. Johnson. "He threw up three times," Mr. Johnson told The Washington Post, "and came back."

He once sent Oliver to a museum in Paris to study Picasso's paintings for how the artist increasingly streamlined his technique. Mr. Johnson's message: Unnecessary movement slows you down. Oliver took the bronze medal in the 110-meter hurdles at the 2008 Beijing Games.

The margin of victory in sprints can be thousandths of a second, Mr. Johnson often noted.

"So success is determined by as objective a measure as you can get," he said in a 2008 interview with the St. Petersburg Times. "It has nothing to do with degree of difficulty or whether the Russian judge and the French judge coluded or whatever. Plus, it's the original sport."

Left segregation

Brooks Thomas Johnson was born in Pahokee, Fla., on Feb. 28, 1934. His mother worked as a maid and nanny; his father owned a shoeshine stand.

When he was 9, he moved to



ST. ALBANS SCHOOL

Mr. Johnson, seen in the 1960s, worked as a community organizer in D.C. before coaching the St. Albans School track and field team.

Plymouth, Mass., along with his mother and sister. His mother wanted the children to attend integrated schools, he said. His father stayed in Florida, unwilling to give up the business he started.

Mr. Johnson attended Tufts University outside Boston, becoming a standout sprinter. Ironically, he was too stubborn to take guidance from his coaches, he recalled. "I refused," he said, "to be coached."

After receiving a bachelor's degree in political science from Tufts in 1956, he did graduate work at the University of Chicago's law school. He later said he left law studies because he saw few chances for Black lawyers to rise in private firms at the time.

He continued running with the Chicago Track Club and helped train May, the future Olympic medalist. Also in the club was the aspiring comedian Dick Gregory, a former middle-distance runner at Southern Illinois University.

In 1963, Gregory urged Black members of the U.S. track team to boycott an upcoming international event in the Soviet Union to protest American racial inequities. Mr. Johnson backed Gregory's call, which foreshadowed wider appeals by Black leaders to boycott the 1968 Olympics in

Mexico City. (The boycott effort eventually lost momentum.)

"If the kids in Birmingham can be set upon by dogs," Mr. Johnson told the Associated Press, "then athletes can forgo the pleasures of such a trip. If only White athletes go, the U.S. will not be a power in athletics."

Earlier in 1963, he participated in the Pan American Games, winning gold in the 4x100-meter relay with Ira Murchison, Ollan Cassell and Earl Young.

Mr. Johnson then took a job in Washington as a program officer for the Government Affairs Institute, a policy research group at Georgetown University. In 1964, at 30 years old, he sought one last shot at the Olympics. But on the way to one of the trials at Stanford University, he was involved in a car accident and missed the meet.

Looking ahead to the 1968 Games, he coached Esther Stroy, a D.C. teenager who was part of a neighborhood track club and made the U.S. Olympic team in the 400 meters. She finished fifth in the semifinals after a hamstring injury.

For the Amateur Athletic Union's indoor championships in 1970, Mr. Johnson had trained a wooden-track specialist, Martin McGrady, for the 600-yard race against the 1968 Olympic

400-meter winner, Lee Evans. McGrady and Evans were shoulder to shoulder for much of the race. McGrady pulled ahead with a final kick, clocking a world record at 1:07.6. Mr. Johnson clicked down so hard on his stopwatch that he broke it.

After St. Albans, Mr. Johnson — almost always wearing his trademark straw hat — became assistant track coach at the University of Florida from 1975 to 1979 and then took over as head coach at Stanford until 1992. He finished his collegiate coaching career with California Polytechnic State University from 1993 to 1996.

Mr. Johnson served on the U.S. coaching team in several Olympics, including as head of the women's team for the 1984 Los Angeles Games and as relay coach in 2008. In 1996, he was hired by Disney to help build a sports training program at Walt Disney World in Florida.

Into his 80s, Mr. Johnson was still sought out by runners. In 2018, the 100-meter champion from the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Justin Gatlin, returned to Mr. Johnson after leaving his longtime coach, Dennis Mitchell, who faced doping allegations. (Gatlin had twice been barred from competition for use of banned substances.) In 2019, Gatlin was part of the winning team in the 4x100-meters relay at the World Athletics Championships in Qatar.

A reporter once asked Mr. Johnson: What got you into coaching? "To be honest about it," he replied, "I think it's competing vicariously."

His marriage to the former Deanne Carlsen ended in divorce. Survivors include his wife of 29 years, Elizabeth Riccardi, and their two sons.

Mr. Johnson defended his uncompromising style as part of the psychology of athletics at the highest levels.

"At the end of the day, there has to be a screw loose," he once said. "There's no well-adjusted athlete on the Olympic podium. Because if you are well-adjusted, you will not go to the extremes necessary to get there."

DEATH NOTICE

BROWN



PAMELA WEDD BROWN (Age 94)
Pamela Wedd Brown, local artist, was born in France to Canadian parents on November 21, 1928 and died on August 4, 2023 in Washington, DC. Her early years were spent in France until her family fled as the Nazis occupied France in 1941. They settled in Toronto after spending a year in Washington, DC while her father was military attaché to the Canadian consulate. As a young woman she returned to France to study at Ecole Des Beaux-Arts and Academie Julian in Paris. There she met her future husband, Charles Freeman Brown, who was working at NATO with her father. They married in 1952 in London. She was an avid skier and won races in the Alps and later became an enthusiastic sailor.

DEATH NOTICE

DEATH NOTICE

BRAGA



DR. MARTHA S. BRAGA
On Sunday, July 7, 2024, Dr. Martha S. Braga died at home in Washington, DC. Dr. Braga was born in Mercedes Uruguay on September 4, 1942, and spent much of her adult life in the Washington, DC area. She worked as an attorney for the Organization of American States, particularly on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. She lived a full life, was an accomplished painter with a passion for Bricolage, and traveled worldwide. She most enjoyed her time with loved ones, including her family, close friends, and colleagues. She is survived by her son Marcelo Banderas, daughter-in-law Kirsten Dykmans, and her grandsons Sebastian and Tomas. Service is private.

DEATH NOTICE

ROSS

CHARLES BRYAN ROSS
Charles Bryan Ross, 88, of Fairfax, VA, passed peacefully surrounded by his family on June 12, 2024. Loving husband of Mary Jane; father of Peter, Daniel, Andrew, Phillip, and Matthew, and brother of Judy Cori. Visitation will be held Saturday, July 13, from 11 a.m. to 12 Noon with a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated at noon at St. Ambrose Catholic Church, 3901 Woodburn Rd, Annandale, VA. Burial at Arlington National Cemetery on Tuesday, October 3, 11 a.m. Share a memory with the family: fairfaxmemorialfuneralhome.com

SNYDER

RUTH SNYDER
On Tuesday, July 9, 2024, RUTH SNYDER of Washington, DC, beloved daughter of the late David and Edith Karl; loving sister of Edward (Martha) Karl and Karen (John Heide) Karl. Also survived by several nieces and nephews. Graveside funeral service will be held on Thursday, July 11, 2024, 11 a.m. at Ohev Shalom The National Synagogue Cemetery, 3233 15th Place SE, Washington, DC. Shiva will be observed at the home of Edward and Martha Karl. Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of your choice. Arrangements entrusted to TORCHINSKY HEBREW FUNERAL HOME, 202-541-1001.

DEATH NOTICE

SHERROD-ALI



GILDA L. SHERROD-ALI ESQ.
It is with profound sadness that we convey the passing of our beloved Gilda L. Sherrod-Ali, Esq., who passed away on June 25, 2024.

She leaves to cherish her mother, children, grandchildren and a host of relatives and special friends.

Homegoing service is July 12, Viewing 9:30 until time of Service 11 a.m. at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, NW, Washington, DC.

Arrangements by Universal II Mortuary, Inc. www.umifunerals.com

DEATH NOTICE

HARPER-SIMON



GLORIA C. HARPER-SIMON ESQ.
The Simon and Norwood families are saddened to announce the peaceful passing of our beloved Gloria C. Harper-Simon, Esq., on July 3, 2024. She is survived by Joseph, her devoted husband, son, and many relatives and friends. Visitation will take place at Joseph Gawler's Sons, LLC, 3130 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016 at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 13, 2024, followed by a celebration of her life at noon.



MERKSON

GEORGE UDO MERKSON
On Monday, July 8, 2024, George Udo Merkson, 84, of Cooksville. Husband of Leslie Simon Merkson; father of Kimberly Estep (George), Stephen Merkson (Angelique); stepfather of Carol Ingles (Chris); grandfather of nine; and one great-grandchild. The family will welcome friends on Friday, July 12, 2024, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Pritts Funeral Home & Chapel, 412 Washington Rd., Westminster, MD. Funeral services will be Saturday, July 13 at 11 a.m. at the funeral home. Interment will be in Evergreen Memorial Gardens, in Finksburg. For full obituary and online condolences please visit www.prittsfuneralhome.com

OWENS

HAROLD OWENS
Passed away on July 1, 2024. A Celebration of Life Service will be held on July 17, 2024, at Marshall-March Funeral Home, located at 4308 Suitland Rd, Suitland-Silver Hill, Maryland 20746. Visitation will begin at 2 p.m., followed by the service at 3 p.m.

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

GORDON



BRUCE ARMSTRONG GORDON
March 27, 1950 – June 16, 2024

Dr. Bruce Armstrong Gordon, 74, died on Sunday, June 16, 2024, at an assisted-living residence in Bristol, TN, near his beloved home in Abingdon, VA.

Born on March 27, 1950, in Boston to Robert F. and Mary Elizabeth Armstrong Gordon, Bruce grew up in Fairfax, VA; graduated from W. T. Woodson High School, and was a longtime resident of Annandale, VA. A particle physicist by training, he held an undergraduate degree from MIT and a PhD from Harvard.

He worked as a research physicist at Science

The Washington Post

DEATH NOTICE

Applications International Corporation in McLean, VA, and simultaneously co-founded Media Systems, Inc., consultants to radio, television and cable outlets. In 1955 he became a full-time systems architect and software developer for Media Systems, where he remained until retirement.

His wide-ranging enthusiasms included fantasy and science fiction writing, pottery making, Egyptology, music from the classical composers to Gilbert & Sullivan and Stephen Sondheim, food and wine. He treasured good conversation among friends and was always ready to share a laugh.

Bruce and his much loved first wife, Dr. Anne Elaine Caesar, were together for 35 years until her death in 2009. He later traded northern for southwestern Virginia and was married again in 2014 to his cherished second wife, Dr. Deborah Michelle Garfield. She passed away in 2023. He was also preceded in death by his parents.

Survivors include a brother, Donald R. Gordon; a sister-in-law, Carol A. Johnston; and nephews Christopher, Alexander and Andrew Gordon, all of Los Angeles. In addition, Bruce leaves behind loving brothers-in-law David and Michael Garfield, of Tennessee, and many devoted family members, friends, colleagues and caregivers. All who knew him will miss Bruce's intelligence and creativity, his wit and his gentle spirit.

A memorial service will be scheduled for a later date. Arrangements by Weaver Funeral Home, Bristol, TN.

DIMARIO



MICHAEL DIMARIO
Michael F. DiMario, age 87, passed away peacefully on July 5, 2024, in Annapolis, where he was in the loving care of his son Stephen DiMario. Born on May 30, 1937, in New York, Michael was the son of the late Philip and Frances DiMario (nee Pizzoferrato). He grew up in the Bronx. Michael attended Cardinal Hayes High School and later graduated from Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, West Virginia. Michael continued his graduate studies, ob-

taining a JD from Georgetown Law School and completed an AMP at Harvard Business School. Michael married his college sweetheart, Priscilla C. Weaver on June 25, 1960, together they raised three sons: Michael Gregory, Stephen Robert, and Christopher James. He was a proud grandfather to two grandchildren, Gregory and Serephina. Michael had a distinguished career as a civil servant. He was a captain in the Air Force in the Office of Special Investigations and was stationed in Dover, Delaware, and Scotland, UK. After obtaining his JD, Michael began his legal career as a contracts, wills, and torts attorney. The culmination of his 30+ year career was his appointment by President William J. Clinton as the Director of Government Printing Office, serving as the 23rd Public Printer of the United States of America until his retirement in 2003. Michael also served many years as a Bowie City Councilman. A public visitation will be held on July 13, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Lasting Tributes Funeral Home, 814 Bestgate Road, Annapolis, followed by a burial at Hillcrest Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Forest Drive, Annapolis. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Hospice of Chesapeake. www.LastingTributesFuneralCare.com

LARAMIE



MARGARET HANNAN LARAMIE
Margaret Hannan "Peggy" Laramie, 67, beloved wife of John "Kip" Laramie, moved to her new heavenly home on July 7, 2024, after bravely battling a rare form of non-smoker's lung cancer for more than two years.

than 30 years in public information and executive communications for the National Cable Television Association, the American Gas Association, and AARP.

Loving and thoughtful Peggy was an artist and avid storyteller whose passion was crafting text and photos into memory books for family and friends. She and Kip loved gardening, hikes, golf, good food, and nature.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her siblings Cathy Hotka (Michael), Marilyn Hannan, and Tom Hannan (Cheryl); and her sisters-in-law, Carole Laramie, Maria Laramie, Joy Laramie (Jamie Nicholas) and several nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her parents, Patrick J. and Margaret T. Hannan and brother-in-law, Joe Laramie.

Special thanks to Alex Spira, M.D. and NEXT Oncology Virginia for extending Peggy's life by enrolling her in a series of clinical research trials that sought to achieve FDA-approved cancer treatments. The family also wishes to acknowledge the wonderful care given at VHC Health and all the other medical professionals who cared for her along the way.

Friends are invited to pay their respects at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 13 at Queen of Apostles Church, 4401 Sano St., Alexandria, VA 22312. A requiem Mass will follow at 2 p.m.

LECOMPTÉ



JANE STEWART LECOMPTÉ
Jane Stewart LeCompte, nee Jane Laraine Stewart, was born in Los Angeles, California, on January 27, 1946. She grew up in Burbank, California, and graduated from Cal State Northridge in June 1968. She joined the US Navy on October 22, 1968, and served for 26 years. She achieved the

rank of Captain, and her final posting was as the Commanding Officer of the Military Sealift Command Europe, headquartered in London, England.

On July 7, 1984, she married Commander Walter LeCompte Jr., USN. In 1990, they moved aboard the sailing vessel Callisto, which would be her home for the next 30 years. After her retirement in 1994, Callisto sailed from London, along the coast of Europe, into the Mediterranean Sea for seven years, then down the Red Sea, across the Indian Ocean into the South Pacific Ocean, and finally to Fiji. In 2020, she was diagnosed with cancer and returned to the US for treatment.

On July 1, 2024, she lost her battle with cancer and passed away peacefully in her home in Burke, Virginia. She is survived by her loving husband, three stepchildren, five grandchildren, her loving sister, her niece and nephew, and her sister-in-law and nephews. A viewing will be held at Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home, 9902 Braddock Road, Fairfax, Virginia, from 4 to 6 p.m. on July 19, 2024. She will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be determined.

ROSEN



LAWRENCE ROSEN "Larry" (Age 100)
Lawrence Rosen a.k.a. Larry, Dad, Zayde, Great Zayde, Dear, and Doc died peacefully in bed eight days shy of his 101st birthday. The secret to his long life? Unconditional love of his family, total immersion into running his store Smith's Pharmacy (1959 to 1968) followed by several more retail ventures including at the DC Farmer's Market (Stand 52), his NewsSpot mini chain, The Holiday Shop, Marbi's, Nibbles, Get the Message, High Browse, and Court-house Cards. He spent a decade of his retirement years continuing to work as a shomer, guarding depressed persons, while reciting psalms and comforting mourners. He took pride in being a veteran of the 42nd Rainbow Division (1943 to 1946, Technical Sergeant), a liberator of Dachau Concentration Camp. He strived to incorporate Jewish values into his daily life, especially being kind to others. Thanks to the compassion of his Niece and Nephew, Judy and Richie Cohen, he was able to spend the last two years of his life with supportive loving care 24/7. His departure leaves a gaping hole in the fabric of our lives: daughter Sherry Scheinman, sons Steve Rosen and Stan (Venla) Rosen; grandsons Michael Scheinman and Dan (Blakelee) Scheinman, great grandchildren Levi and Bassi, and beloved life partner of 30 years, Judy Kusheloff, as well as many cousins, nieces, and nephews. The funeral will be at Mt. Lebanon Cemetery in Adelphi, MD on Friday, July 12 at 11 a.m. Shiva following the funeral at the home of Stan and Venla Rosen home, p.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, July 14 at the Rosen home on Sunday at 7:30 p.m. Contact Hines Rinaldi Funeral Home for further information at 301.622.2290.



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THE WEATHER

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Slightly lower highs



Somewhat lower humidity moves in behind the weak cold front inciting the storms. Sunshine is dominant as highs probably reach for 90 and into the low 90s.

Today
Partly sunny



92° 77°
FEELS*: 95°
CHNCE PRECIP: 5%
WIND: W 7-14 mph
HUMIDITY: Moderate

Friday
T-storms



82° 74°
FEELS: 87°
P: 90%
W: E 6-12 mph
H: High

Saturday
T-storm



91° 75°
FEELS: 99°
P: 40%
W: NE 4-8 mph
H: High

Sunday
Partly sunny, hot



97° 76°
FEELS: 103°
P: 20%
W: S 6-12 mph
H: High

Monday
Mostly sunny, hot



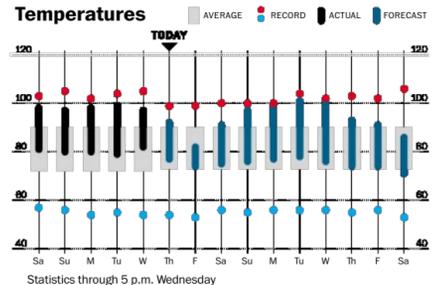
99° 77°
FEELS: 102°
P: 25%
W: W 6-12 mph
H: High

Tuesday
Very hot



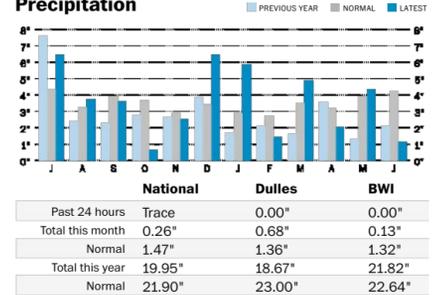
101° 78°
FEELS: 105°
P: 10%
W: WSW 6-12 mph
H: High

OFFICIAL RECORD



Temperatures			
	National	Dulles	BWI
High	97° 4:00 p.m.	94° 4:00 p.m.	95° 3:00 p.m.
Low	82° 6:00 a.m.	80° 6:00 a.m.	80° 4:00 a.m.
Normal	90°/72°	88°/67°	89°/68°
Record high	105° 1936	99° 1988	107° 1936
Record low	54° 1894	53° 1963	55° 1961

Difference from 30-yr. avg. (National): this month: +3.9° yr. to date: +3.1°

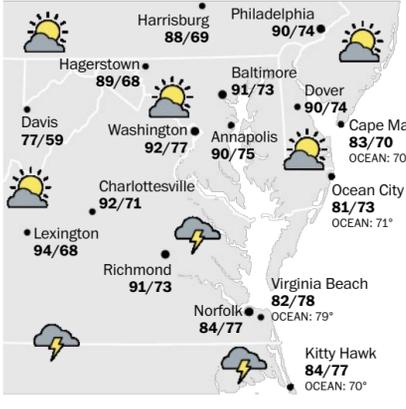


Precipitation			
	National	Dulles	BWI
Past 24 hours	Trace	0.00"	0.00"
Total this month	0.26"	0.68"	0.13"
Normal	1.47"	1.36"	1.32"
Total this year	19.95"	18.67"	21.82"
Normal	21.90"	23.00"	22.64"

Moon Phases		
Phase	July 13	July 27
First Quarter	July 13	July 27
Full Moon	July 21	July 27
Last Quarter	July 27	July 27
New Moon	July 27	July 27

Solar system		
Planet	Rise	Set
Sun	5:52 a.m.	8:34 p.m.
Moon	11:20 a.m.	11:51 p.m.
Venus	6:41 a.m.	9:14 p.m.
Mars	2:10 a.m.	4:17 p.m.
Jupiter	3:07 a.m.	5:41 p.m.
Saturn	11:29 p.m.	10:56 a.m.

REGION



Pollen: High
Grass Low
Trees Moderate
Weeds Low
Mold High

Air Quality: Good
Dominant cause: Ozone

UV: Extreme
11 out of 11+

Blue Ridge: Today, partly sunny; less humid. High 73 to 80. Winds north-northwest 6-12 mph. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 61 to 65. Winds northeast 4-8 mph. Friday, a couple of showers, a thunderstorm, but a thunderstorm in spots in southern parts.

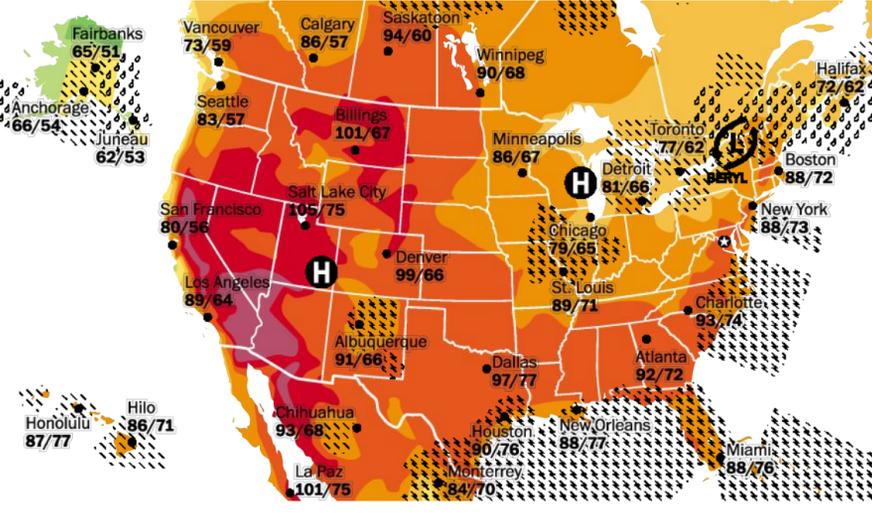
Atlantic beaches: Today, mostly cloudy, breezy, humid; a couple of showers, a heavy thunderstorm, but a stray thunderstorm in the north this afternoon. High 81 to 86. Winds south 8-16 mph. Tonight, a shower, thunderstorm. Low 69 to 77. Winds south 8-16 mph.

Waterways: Upper Potomac River: Today, partly sunnysunshine. Wind west-northwest 4-8 knots. Waves 2 feet or less. Visibility unrestricted. • **Lower Potomac and Chesapeake Bay:** Today, partly sunny, a stray thunderstorm. Wind west 6-12 knots. Waves 1-2 feet on the Lower Potomac; 1-3 feet on the Chesapeake Bay. • **River Stages:** The stage at Little Falls will be around 2.70 feet today, with no change of 2.70 Friday. Flood stage at Little Falls is 10 feet.

Today's tides (High tides in Bold)

Location	High	Low	High	Low
Washington	12:33 a.m.	7:12 a.m.	12:39 p.m.	7:32 p.m.
Annapolis	3:27 a.m.	9:34 a.m.	4:10 p.m.	10:28 p.m.
Ocean City	6:07 a.m.	12:05 p.m.	6:14 p.m.	none
Norfolk	1:39 a.m.	7:57 a.m.	2:15 p.m.	8:23 p.m.
Point Lookout	5:37 a.m.	12:27 p.m.	6:38 p.m.	none

NATION



Yesterday's National
High: Bullhead City, AZ 118°
Low: Fairplay, CO 31°
for the 48 contiguous states

World
High: Nasiriyah, Iraq 123°
Low: Malargue, Argentina 17°
excludes Antarctica

NATIONAL		Today		Tomorrow		WORLD		Today		Tomorrow	
Albany, NY	86/67/t	87/69/c	87/69/c	87/69/c	87/69/c	Des Moines	83/65/pc	87/70/t	87/70/t	87/70/t	87/70/t
Albuquerque	91/66/c	95/69/s	95/69/s	95/69/s	95/69/s	Detroit	81/66/pc	82/66/t	82/66/t	82/66/t	82/66/t
Anchorage	66/54/c	66/52/c	66/52/c	66/52/c	66/52/c	El Paso	98/74/c	99/74/s	99/74/s	99/74/s	99/74/s
Atlanta	92/72/s	93/75/pc	93/75/pc	93/75/pc	93/75/pc	Fairbanks, AK	65/51/c	73/54/c	73/54/c	73/54/c	73/54/c
Austin	95/73/c	93/74/pc	93/74/pc	93/74/pc	93/74/pc	Fargo, ND	89/67/s	90/69/pc	90/69/pc	90/69/pc	90/69/pc
Baltimore	91/73/s	81/74/t	81/74/t	81/74/t	81/74/t	Hartford, CT	93/69/pc	89/70/t	89/70/t	89/70/t	89/70/t
Billings, MT	101/67/s	102/65/s	102/65/s	102/65/s	102/65/s	Honolulu	87/77/sh	89/77/pc	89/77/pc	89/77/pc	89/77/pc
Birmingham	92/69/s	94/71/s	94/71/s	94/71/s	94/71/s	Houston	90/76/t	88/77/t	88/77/t	88/77/t	88/77/t
Bismarck, ND	92/65/s	95/65/s	95/65/s	95/65/s	95/65/s	Indianapolis	82/67/t	86/69/t	86/69/t	86/69/t	86/69/t
Boise	106/70/s	107/74/s	107/74/s	107/74/s	107/74/s	Jackson, MS	94/71/s	96/74/c	96/74/c	96/74/c	96/74/c
Boston	88/72/pc	89/71/t	89/71/t	89/71/t	89/71/t	Jacksonville, FL	93/72/t	95/74/t	95/74/t	95/74/t	95/74/t
Buffalo	75/63/r	85/68/pc	85/68/pc	85/68/pc	85/68/pc	Kansas City, MO	87/68/pc	91/73/s	91/73/s	91/73/s	91/73/s
Burlington, VT	83/69/pc	84/66/pc	84/66/pc	84/66/pc	84/66/pc	Las Vegas	117/92/s	115/90/pc	115/90/pc	115/90/pc	115/90/pc
Charleston, SC	95/77/r	89/76/t	89/76/t	89/76/t	89/76/t	Little Rock	93/73/s	94/72/s	94/72/s	94/72/s	94/72/s
Charleston, WV	86/61/c	92/66/c	92/66/c	92/66/c	92/66/c	Los Angeles	89/64/s	87/65/s	87/65/s	87/65/s	87/65/s
Charlotte	93/74/pc	87/73/t	87/73/t	87/73/t	87/73/t	Louisville	88/70/pc	91/72/t	91/72/t	91/72/t	91/72/t
Cheyenne, WY	92/59/s	96/60/s	96/60/s	96/60/s	96/60/s	Memphis	91/73/s	92/74/s	92/74/s	92/74/s	92/74/s
Chicago	79/65/t	85/68/pc	85/68/pc	85/68/pc	85/68/pc	Miami	88/76/t	90/80/t	90/80/t	90/80/t	90/80/t
Cincinnati	85/67/pc	89/69/t	89/69/t	89/69/t	89/69/t	Milwaukee	76/64/s	79/66/pc	79/66/pc	79/66/pc	79/66/pc
Cleveland	78/64/c	84/66/pc	84/66/pc	84/66/pc	84/66/pc	Minneapolis	86/67/s	87/70/s	87/70/s	87/70/s	87/70/s
Dallas	97/77/s	97/76/s	97/76/s	97/76/s	97/76/s	Nashville	91/69/s	94/71/s	94/71/s	94/71/s	94/71/s
Denver	99/66/s	101/66/s	101/66/s	101/66/s	101/66/s	New Orleans	88/77/t	92/78/t	92/78/t	92/78/t	92/78/t
						New York City	88/73/pc	84/72/t	84/72/t	84/72/t	84/72/t
						Norfolk	84/77/t	83/76/t	83/76/t	83/76/t	83/76/t

Urban planners hope conceptual designs inspire action in the nation's capital

PARKLAND FROM B1

of the District," Flis said.

Flis said discussions to formulate the concept began about 18 months ago. The sketches build off existing long-term plans from 2009. The concepts were conceived in collaboration with the District Office of Planning, the Kennedy Center and the National Park Service, which manages land in the proposed area.

Planners also worked with technical experts who provided recommendations. The sketches are designed more to inspire action than to provide specific, concrete plans.

"This is certainly a long-term effort. This is not something that is going to happen immediately, but as part of this design work and thinking about what is needed for this part of the District," Flis said in an interview. "This is kind of that, 'Keep that conversation going, keep the excitement, keep the momentum going.'"

The planners aim to create a more efficient transportation infrastructure that better connects the Foggy Bottom and West End areas, while providing more land for cultural and commemorative uses, Flis said.

Such ideas have been floated since the Kennedy Center was constructed, said Thomas Luebke, secretary of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.

One benefit in the latest design proposal is a land reclamation effort that would provide nearly 30 acres in rarefied real estate.

Commissioners "endorse the



A sketch shows green space connecting the Kennedy Center and the National Mall, which are currently separated by highway infrastructure. Officials want to preserve the traffic movements that exist today but provide improvements both aesthetic and practical.

general idea," Luebke said. "It's one of these ideas that's hard not to like because it does so many good things. There's so much competition for commemorative sites on the Mall."

The corridor includes a winding collection of freeway ramps that connect to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. Such a sweeping redesign would probably face intense scrutiny from transportation engineers and commuters alike.

tion engineers and commuters alike.

The existing highway infrastructure physically separates the Kennedy Center and nearby neighborhoods from the Mall, Flis said. Officials want to preserve the traffic movements that exist today but provide improvements that are both aesthetic and practical.

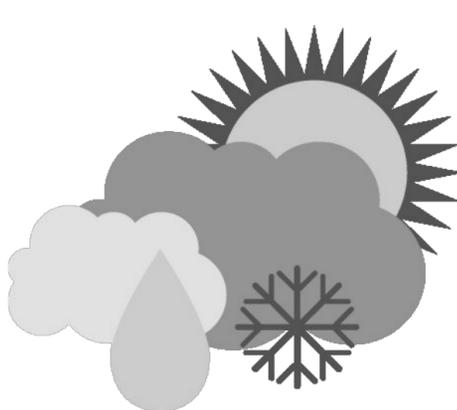
"There will need to be transportation analysis if this moves forward to the next step," Flis said. "The transportation infrastructure is not really efficient."

In presentations, planners and technical advisers offered key recommendations to move ahead from this preliminary phase:

- Forming a "Cultural District Development Authority to champion the vision";
- Lobbying for congressional support, including a federal-led infrastructure overhaul and legislation to allow redesign of federally controlled land;
- Designing a "grand boulevard on E Street" as part of a "new cultural district."

The report lacks specifics on accomplishing these recommendations or a timeline for even beginning more robust discussions. But for now, planners hope the concept design will spark action.

"It's a logical and needful step for the city to take," Luebke said. "But someone has to champion it. That's the trick."



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JOYCE LEE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Daphney Edouard, 26, doesn't mind being the youngest woman in her morning workout classes in Reston, Va. But every once in a while, the multi-decade age gap between Edouard, a digital producer for Sephora, and her fitness comrades makes itself glaringly evident. Earlier this year, one classmate approached her after class and gestured at Edouard's forehead. "She was like, 'Tell me, what religion does that represent?'"

Edouard was wearing a black, star-shaped hydrocolloid acne patch between her eyebrows.

"I laughed, and she was like, 'What's so funny?'" Edouard recalls. "I just said: 'I have a pimple. This is a pimple.'"

The rest of the women in her class "were surprised I wanted to wear such a vibrant, loud pimple patch to the workout class, out in public," she says.

For a few years now, pimple patches like the one Edouard had on that day — opaque,

A breakout fashion statement

No longer just skin-care tools, pimple patches have become chic accessories

BY ASHLEY FETTERS MALOY

whimsically shaped, in conspicuously non-human hues such as bright yellow, jet black, magenta and even rainbow — have been showing up on more and more faces in workout classes, in classrooms, at workplaces and online. Many are medicated with hydrocolloid or salicylic acid; they treat pimples while also covering them up, protecting them from both idle fingers and strangers' stares. As a skin-care tool, pimple patches, which gained traction in the late 2010s, were a game-changing development in skin-care technology. But they've also become a fashion trend. And although their proliferation heralds a shift in attitudes toward acne — one of the most universal discomforts of being a human — they've also begun to act as a social signifier.

The first generation of pimple patches arrived in the late 2010s. Hero's Mighty Patch hydrocolloid dots, for example, debuted in 2017, and Peace Out began offering

SEE PIMPLE PATCHES ON C2

Catherine Pham, who modeled for this shoot, sits at John's Restaurant in Palm Desert, Calif., wearing pimple patches.

In 'Rust' trial, divided statements on culpability

Events of the Baldwin case moved quickly on the 1st day of testimony

BY WILLIAM TRIPLETT AND SAMANTHA CHERY

SANTA FE, N.M. — Prosecutors began to make their case to a jury Wednesday that Alec Baldwin is responsible for the shooting death of "Rust" cinematographer Halyna Hutchins nearly three years ago. Special prosecutor Er-linda Johnson said in her opening statement that the actor repeatedly "violated the cardinal rules of firearm safety" and — despite

his contentions — had to have pulled the trigger that released a live round from a prop gun, killing Hutchins and wounding the movie's director.

"You will see him using this gun as a pointer to point at people, to point at things. You will see him cock the hammer when he's not supposed to cock the hammer. You will see him put his finger on the trigger when his finger's not supposed to be on the trigger," Johnson said.

Seated at the defense table, Baldwin barely looked at the prosecutor as she spoke. He took notes and sometimes rested his head on his hand. The actor's

SEE BALDWIN ON C3

CBS NEWS

Network President Ingrid Ciprián-Matthews resigns. **C3**

CYPRESS HILL

An orchestral 'Simpsons' joke comes to life. **C8**

CAROLYN HAX

Boyfriend asks partner not to write about him. **C8**

Clooney calls for Biden to step aside

The actor had been one of the president's strongest supporters in Hollywood

BY HERB SCRIBNER AND JANAY KINGSBERRY

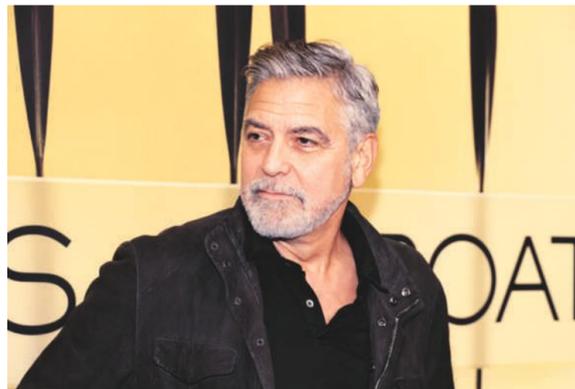
George Clooney called Wednesday for President Biden to exit the 2024 presidential election race, urging Democrats to pick a new nominee.

The Academy Award-winning actor's defection adds to a wave of outcry from prominent Democrats calling for Biden, 81, to step aside after his halting, confused performance in a June 27 presidential debate against Donald Trump, 78, who has long claimed that Biden is mentally unfit to lead the country.

Clooney's criticism is especially notable, because he was one of Biden's biggest, best-known supporters in Hollywood — a major base of support for the president that now appears to be teetering.

"I love Joe Biden. As a senator. As a vice president and as president," Clooney wrote in a New York Times op-ed. "I consider him a friend, and I believe in him."

"But the one battle he cannot win is the fight against time," he added. "... It's devastating to say



DIA DIPASUPLI/GETTY IMAGES

George Clooney wrote in a New York Times op-ed that President Biden should exit the race. "This is about age. Nothing more."

it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fund-raiser was not the Joe 'big F-ing deal' Biden of 2010. He wasn't even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate."

Simon Halls, a representative for Clooney, declined to comment.

Clooney added that Democrats have become so focused on defeating Trump in the upcoming election that they have "opted to ignore every warning sign" about the president's age. He said Biden's debate performance, as well as his ABC interview with

SEE CLOONEY ON C3

Friction with White House over health

BY JEREMY BARR

Things devolved quickly on Monday afternoon when White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre faced a press corps that had grown increasingly frustrated over the previous week.

"My first [question] to you is on the credibility of this White House when it comes to talking about the president's health," said Associated Press correspondent Zeke Miller.

Soon, CBS News correspondent Ed O'Keefe was lashing out at Jean-Pierre for not divulging information about a doctor's visits to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

"Karine, you're not answering the question. It's a very basic, direct question," he said.

Jean-Pierre, seemingly taken aback by his tone, asked O'Keefe to

SEE PRESS CORPS ON C2

Pimple patches become red-hot

PIMPLE PATCHES FROM CI

flesh-toned and translucent versions of the same concept around the same time.

Then, in 2019, came Starface, whose pentagram-shaped Hydro-Star patches would eventually be available in a full spectrum of opaque, vibrant colors. Decorative and spunky, they were a sensation almost immediately. Hailey and Justin Bieber were photographed sporting them around in their daily lives and, crucially, showed up wearing them in photos on social media. So did Florence Pugh, Willow Smith and Nicola Peltz Beckham, and the brand even debuted its first black version of the product on models in a 2022 Puppets and Puppets fashion show.

In addition to being a hot celebrity accessory, though, Starface products earned a devoted following among adolescents and young adults. These days, 60 percent of Starface's business comes from Gen Z and the ascendant consumers of Gen Alpha (born in 2010 and later), according to Kara Brothers, the brand's president. Brothers spoke to The Washington Post after interviewing high school students in London, "and they were talking about how they all kind of trade pimple patches at their lockers," she says.

Cadence Lawson, 12, just finished sixth grade in Bowling Green, Ky., and can confirm: She and her classmates trade their Starface pimple patches not just for other Starface colors, but also for higher-value goods. "It's mainly at lunch," she says. "For ice cream, or something like that."

"They're the new Pokémon cards," cracks Cadence's dad, Daniel, 34. Earlier this year, Daniel, who creates video content with his wife on several platforms as the Awesome Lawsons, starred in a skit inspired by Cadence's use of the Starface stickers. (Though, as Cadence points out, she has gotten the last laugh when her dad has borrowed the occasional Starface patch to treat a breakout of his own.)

Starface's dominance in the pimple-patch game is hard to deny. Other brands have also begun offering colorful acne patches in eye-catching shapes (see: Peace Out's rainbow offering in the shape of a two-fingered peace sign), and the popularity of Starface itself has even inspired some young people to wear the patches purely as fashion statements — with no pimple or blemish underneath.

Cadence has seen the little stars adorn plenty of acne-free faces at her elementary school; Annie Miller, 15, has seen the same in the halls of her public high school in Fountain Hills, Ariz. (Both of the girls themselves, though, say they tend to save their patches for when they have pimples.)

When Starface patches are on a



PHOTOS BY JOYCE LEE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

TOP: Starface pimple patches sit on a table at John's Restaurant in Palm Desert, Calif. Some Starface products come with a convenient carrying case. LEFT: The first generation of pimple patches mostly included clear or skin-colored stickies. But the second wave has introduced opaque, decorative versions. Here, model Catherine Pham wears Hello Kitty-style pimple patches.



jawline or chin, Annie says, she assumes they're being used to treat actual zits. On a cheek, though, or in that alluring Marilyn Monroe mole position, above the lip? That's just fashion, baby.

(Brothers adds that Starface formulates its products to be safe for all of its youngster customers, as well as the adolescent and older ones. Hydrocolloid, a gentle active ingredient that creates a moist

environment, has historically been used to speed up healing in all kinds of skin wounds and is, Brothers says, "a safe ingredient for all.")

As strange and youthfully capricious as such a trend may seem, there is centuries-old precedent for wearing stars and other adorable shapes on the face just for fun, according to Susan Stewart, the author of "Painted Faces: A Colourful History of Cosmetics."

Tiny silk patches in the shapes of "stars, crescent moons, diamonds, all those sorts of things" were often affixed to the faces of well-to-do young people in 17th-century Western Europe. The trend originated in the French royal court, where the patches were initially used to cover up the scars and skin damage from diseases such as smallpox and syphilis, "but they eventually became quite popular. Where they were worn on the face could signify 'I'm married' or 'I'm not married,' or 'I'm available' or 'not available.' Or, alternatively, 'I support this political party or that political party,'" Stewart says. The type or placement may have also indicated astrological signs, she adds, or even religious beliefs. (So Edouard's workout classmate may not have been totally clueless — just off by a few hundred years.)

Today, used as accessories, the star-shaped stickies may signify something else. Annie, the rising 10th-grader in Arizona, remembers her reaction when a classmate came to school one morning last year wearing

somewhere around seven Starface stars, which didn't appear to be covering acne: "I'm like, 'You've got a lot of money,'" she recalls.

As Annie's mom, Sidney Miller — whose other two daughters, 12-year-old twins, also use Starface products — points out, one package of 32 can cost around \$11 to \$17. "Even if they put two on a day during the school week," she says, a pack for one child would last about only three weeks. "So they constantly have to have new ones."

Miller isn't surprised to learn that children are bartering for them, "because there are probably kids who don't have the access otherwise." To Stewart, the popularity of opaque, non-camouflaging pimple patches also represents a radical shift in attitudes toward acne. From the snow-white, lead-laced, full-face makeup of the 18th century to the thick concealers of the latter 20th and the color correctors of the 21st, the objective has virtually always been to cover up pimples by making them look like the rest of the unaffected skin around them. As if to say, *I don't even have acne.*

To cover up a visible blemish with an equally visible patch, though, sends an entirely different message: *I have a pimple. We're just not going to look at it.* (Or risk exacerbating it with layers of makeup.)

"The generations coming up are certainly more comfortable in their skin, and they're definitely yearning for brands, people, workplaces that allow them to show up exactly as they are," Brothers says.

"It's certainly very different to how these sort of things have been dealt with in the past," Stewart says. "It seems quite an open-minded and a positive way of looking at things, instead of trying to achieve the unachievable."

Indeed, Gen Z seems more reluctant than previous generations to feel shame (or to shame one another) for dealing with issues, such as pimples, that can — and do — happen to anyone. In recent years, TikTokers have shared unedited close-ups of celebrities' skin at the Met Gala and other high-profile, high-glamour events, emphasizing that even people whose entire jobs revolve around being beautiful sometimes have uneven skin textures, hyperpigmentation, wrinkles and, yes, acne.

That attitude, it seems, is contagious. One morning, about a month after Edouard's pimple patch was mistaken for a religious symbol, she says, a different woman from her workout class arrived at that day's session and excitedly pointed to her own face.

It would of course come off before her work meeting later, the classmate said — but there, proudly and unapologetically, was a pimple patch.

This shoot was photographed at John's Restaurant in Palm Desert, Calif. A special thanks to George Argyros.

Modeling by Catherine Pham for DT Model Management. Styled by Bri Caamano. Hair and makeup by Caitlin Krenz for Exclusive Artists.

Reporters push for details from press secretary regarding Biden's health

PRESS CORPS FROM CI

show "a little respect here."

Monday's briefing was emblematic of a growing rift between the White House and the reporters who cover it — a press corps that has chafed for years about having less access to President Biden than they would like, as he sits for fewer interviews and holds fewer news conferences than his predecessors.

In the wake of Biden's halting performance at the June 27 debate against Donald Trump, Jean-Pierre has faced pointed questions and aggressive pushback from journalists about shifting official accounts of the president's health and care.

"There's very little trust right now, and it's really frustrating," said one correspondent, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly. "I think everyone is pissed. It's the lid coming off after 3½ years of pressure-cooking, of us being shut out."

During that Monday briefing, correspondents grew frustrated that Jean-Pierre would not explain why an expert in Parkinson's disease had met multiple times with the main White House physician, according to public logs.

The White House would clarify that evening that the physician, Kevin Cannard, had simply performed the neurological component of the president's annual physical — but only after Jean-Pierre initially told reporters that

she could not identify specific doctors. On Tuesday evening, Jean-Pierre clarified that she misspoke when she suggested during the day's briefing that a Jan. 17 visit by the doctor was unrelated to Biden.

"You've allowed this to fester longer, Karine, unless the White House answers the question," O'Keefe said, after the press secretary refused to name the doctor, citing privacy reasons. "We're a little miffed around here about how information has been shared with the press corps about him."

"I'm not going to [share] that," Jean-Pierre retorted. "... It doesn't matter how hard you push me, it doesn't matter how angry you get with me."

The clashes on Monday reminded some reporters of the Trump administration, when tensions ran high between reporters and press secretaries such as Sean Spicer, Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Kayleigh McEnany, who all seemed to relish clashes with members of the media.

"It was the Trumpiest briefing I've been in since Trump left office," the correspondent speaking anonymously added.

Questions from reporters started flying almost as soon as Biden left the debate stage on June 27. But they picked up in intensity and directness during a press briefing the following Tuesday, when NBC News correspondent Kelly O'Donnell, one of the deans of the White House press corps,



CRAIG HUDSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Karine Jean-Pierre answers questions regarding President Biden's health during a Monday briefing, which was emblematic of a growing rift between the White House and the reporters who cover it.

asked Jean-Pierre whether "anyone in the White House [is] hiding information about the president's health or his ability to do the job day-to-day."

Another reporter asked Jean-Pierre, "Are you being straight with the American people on this?"

That day, and in the briefings that have followed, Jean-Pierre has largely rejected calls from re-

porters to provide more information about Biden's health than has already been released.

"My feeling is this is the most secretive and secluded presidency I've ever covered," said correspondent Brian Karem, a writer for Salon, who famously clashed with Trump press secretaries. "There is every indication from the way they conduct business that the

press and public access to this president is not of high priority. And that is a mistake."

Jean-Pierre also faced pushback for offering varying accounts of Biden's recent medical history. She initially told reporters that he had not had an exam since February. Later, she clarified that the president has had short verbal "check-ins" with his doctor, in-

cluding one after the debate.

"I did not mean to steer anyone wrong," she said Monday.

All along, Jean-Pierre has said in briefings that questions about Biden's age and vitality are legitimate. And, during Monday's session, she acknowledged that she has made mistakes.

"I will be the first one to admit: Sometimes I get it wrong," she said. "At least I admit that."

In response to criticism, the White House has defended Jean-Pierre's performance, while also arguing that the Biden administration has been transparent and accessible to the media. Officials emphasized the number of overall interactions the president has had with the media — including the more informal "gaggles."

"She takes hard questions day in and day out, giving thorough answers and representing President Biden and his agenda for the American people with grace and integrity," deputy press secretary Andrew Bates told The Washington Post on Wednesday.

He added: "We also take care to listen to reporters as they honor their important role of seeking more information. Joe Biden has always said that it is fair for reporters to ask about his age and has always confidently put his values and agenda to the American people."

Will Sommer contributed to this report.

CBS News President Ingrid Ciprián-Matthews resigns; successor not yet named

BY JEREMY BARR

Ingrid Ciprián-Matthews, who has served as president of CBS News since August, resigned Wednesday morning, just three days after the network's parent company, Paramount, agreed to merge with the production company Skydance Media.

The announcement was sudden, if not unexpected, considering the many changes that are expected to come throughout CBS in the wake of the merger, including significant expected cost-cutting.

"We all know our industry and company are going through a transformation and a number of short- and long-term decisions need to be made," Ciprián-Matthews wrote in a memo to CBS News employees. "I do not want to be disingenuous with any of you about who should drive these decisions. I've always leaned into my integrity and my values and I felt it was important to be transparent at this juncture

about my plans."

Ciprián-Matthews will remain with the network through the election as a senior editorial adviser, "given the historical significance of this election and the current political moment."

One of the network's chief rivals, ABC News, is also in a state of extreme flux with just about four months to go before the presidential election. Kim Godwin resigned as president of the network in May, and her deputy, Stacia Deshishku, followed her out the door last month.

Ciprián-Matthews has worked at CBS News since 1993. In her memo, she said she plans to "write [her] next chapter," but did not share further details.

"Over the past four decades, from NPR and CNN to more than 30 years at CBS, I've been able to see much of the world, cover most of the major news events of our lifetimes, and, most of all, work with all of you, in the field, in bureaus, on shows, and from

the front office," she wrote. "I am so thankful for each and every one of you and am filled with gratitude for what we have accomplished."

CBS News has had little continuity at the top in recent years. Legendary television producer Susan Zirinsky, who inspired Holly Hunter's character in the film "Broadcast News," held the role of president for only two years, stepping down in 2021. She was succeeded by a pair of executives, Wendy McMahon and Neeraj Khemlani, but Khemlani left his role last year after a tumultuous tenure.

McMahon, who serves as president and chief executive of CBS News and Stations, said in her own memo that "Ingrid's real superpower lies in the care and compassion she demonstrates for our people and our work."

The network did not immediately announce plans for Ciprián-Matthews's successor, but McMahon said that more updates will soon be shared.



MICHELE CROWE/CBS NEWS

Ingrid Ciprián-Matthews will remain with CBS through the election as a senior editorial adviser.

Clooney joins Colbert and others in calling for Biden to back out of race

CLOONEY FROM C1

George Stephanopoulos, created concerns that next year Democrats would control neither the White House, the Senate nor the House of Representatives.

"This is about age. Nothing more," Clooney wrote. "But also nothing that can be reversed. We are not going to win in November with this president."

Though Clooney did not name a specific person to replace Biden, he pointed to Vice President Har-

ris and a number of Democratic governors (such as Michigan's Gretchen Whitmer and California's Gavin Newsom) as potential candidates.

Clooney's criticisms Wednesday weren't quite out of the blue. In May, the actor called one of Biden's top aides to complain about Biden's denunciation of the International Criminal Court's action against Israeli leaders.

Clooney's wife, Amal Clooney, worked on that case. The call caused some Biden officials to worry that Cloo-

ney would withdraw from a fundraiser that featured former president Barack Obama, late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel and actress Julia Roberts. The event, at which Kimmel interviewed Biden and Obama, reportedly raised more than \$30 million, according to the Associated Press.

Biden has firmly denounced calls from Washington "elites" to step aside since the presidential debate against Trump last month, but the outcry from celebrities who have significantly bolstered

his fundraising efforts adds public and financial pressure — and might be snowballing.

"I think it's a valid point," actor Michael Douglas, who hosted a fundraiser for Biden in April, said of Clooney's op-ed on "The View" on Wednesday. "I'm deeply, deeply concerned." He stopped short of calling for Biden to drop out of the race, however.

He added that Biden's "difficulty with the debate" could have been easily avoided. "First of all, they should have just told the

president to stand up, put a little makeup on him, ... and then where to look," he said. "... And just don't deal with all your facts; just deal with [Trump's] lies."

Actor and filmmaker Rob Reiner also backed Clooney's op-ed in a post shared on X.

"My friend George Clooney has clearly expressed what many of us have been saying. We love and respect Joe Biden," Reiner wrote. "We acknowledge all he has done for our country. But Democracy is facing an existential threat. We

need someone younger to fight back. Joe Biden must step aside."

Other Hollywood players who have lost faith in Biden include CBS "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert, Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings, filmmaker Michael Moore, actor John Cusack and author Stephen King.

"Joe Biden has been a fine president, but it's time for him—in the interests of the America he so clearly loves—to announce he will not run for re-election," King wrote on X.

Actor Baldwin 'played make-believe with a real gun,' prosecutor tells jurors

BALDWIN FROM C1

wife, Hilaria; his brother Stephen; and his sister Elizabeth sat next to one another in the stands.

But Baldwin removed his black, thick-framed glasses and paid close attention when his own lawyer, Alex Spiro, argued in his opening statement that Baldwin's behavior on set was typical of an actor and that gun safety checks weren't in his job description.

Events moved quickly on the first day of testimony in Baldwin's trial for involuntary manslaughter, which could send him to prison for up to 18 months if jurors find him guilty. After opening statements, the jury viewed police lapel camera footage taken moments after the shooting, as emergency responders tended to Hutchins and Joel Souza, the injured director. In one chaotic scene, several people surrounded Hutchins, who was still alive at the time. "Deep breaths! Deep breaths!" a responder yells.

Here are the main arguments prosecutors and defense attorneys previewed on Day 2 of the trial:

Baldwin recklessly handled the gun throughout the filming of 'Rust,' prosecution says.

Johnson called Baldwin "someone who played make-believe with a real gun and violated the cardinal rules of firearm safety" in her statement to jurors.

She spoke of how the actor asked to be given the "biggest gun available" for his role as Harland Rust — a main character in the film — before he arrived on set in October 2021. When he was supposed to have a training session, Johnson said, Baldwin was "running around shooting this gun" and failed to do a safety check with the film's "young" and "inexperienced" armorer, Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, who was previously sentenced to 18 months in prison for her role in Hutchins's death.

Prosecutors intend to show video during the trial of Baldwin's behavior with the weapon — a .45 Colt revolver that was supposed to have been loaded only with dummy rounds.

On the day of the shooting, Baldwin continued to "do his own thing," Johnson said, and violated several movie set safety rules.

Prosecutors had intended to also argue that, as one of the film's producers, Baldwin had a special responsibility for on-set safety. But in a pretrial hearing Monday, Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer ruled that line of argument to be irrelevant, in part because Baldwin was only one of the film's producers.

The gun was in 'perfect working condition' ahead of shooting, prosecution says.

Baldwin has maintained that he never pulled the gun's trigger when it fired, raising



RAMSAY DE GIVE/REUTERS

Actor Alec Baldwin, center, walks toward the Santa Fe, N.M., courthouse Monday as jury selection began for his involuntary manslaughter trial related to the 2021 fatal shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during the filming of the western movie "Rust."

the question of whether it malfunctioned when Hutchins and Souza were shot during a rehearsal on Oct. 21, 2021. But prosecutors say they will bring in witnesses who will speak to the gun being in "perfect working condition" and disprove the actor's claim.

According to Johnson, representatives for the gun's manufacturer, the distribution company and "Rust" ammunition supplier Seth Kenney all found the gun to be in "perfect working order" during inspections before it was brought onto the set of the low-budget western.

The gun was functioning properly when it was examined and tested by the FBI, Johnson added, and it was only damaged during a final test to determine whether the gun could accidentally discharge.

The defense says other crew members, not Baldwin, were responsible for gun safety.

Spiro argued that, "on a movie set, safety has to occur before the gun is placed in the actor's hands."

He said crew members, such as first assistant director Dave Halls and armorer Gutierrez-Reed — not actors like Baldwin — were responsible for the set's firearm safety protocols, or lack thereof.

"There was a real bullet, something that should never be on a movie set, something which has nothing to do with making a movie," he said. "And you will hear no evidence — not one word — that Alec Baldwin had anything to do with that real bullet being brought onto that set."

Baldwin's scene practice on the day of the incident was being guided by Hutchins and Souza.

Moments before the gun discharged, Halls had announced that it contained no live ammo by yelling, "Cold gun!" In the 911 call, the script supervisor explained that Hutchins and Souza were "accidentally shot" and that Halls was to blame.

While police and emergency medical services were on their way, "the cast and crew [were] outside trying to figure out what happened, frantic, talking to those responsible for ... safety," Spiro said. "The armorer's yelling, 'Sorry!' Halls, the first assistant director's panicked. ... Sarah Zachry, the head of props, will tell you she threw some stuff out."

Baldwin's job is to be a character, defense says.

Throughout his opening statement, Spiro asserted that Baldwin simply took the gun from

those responsible for ensuring its safety and that gun safety checks were not part of his responsibilities as an actor.

Baldwin, in his some 40 years in the industry, hasn't made a habit of checking his guns on set, Spiro said, and union guidelines for screen actors don't call for them to carry out these checks.

"The actor's job is to act, to rehearse, to choreograph his moves, to memorize his lines," Spiro said. "... His mind is somewhere else, in the being of another, a century away, an outlaw. He must be able to take that weapon and use it as the person he's acting would: to wave it, to point it, to pull the trigger like actors do, in ways that would be lethal in the real world, but are not lethal on a movie set."

Baldwin's behavior was completely normal to others on set,

too, he added: "Nobody fathomed, imagined, foresaw any possible danger," Spiro added.

The jurors' views on firearms could make a difference.

After 12 jurors and four alternates were chosen from among 70 prospective jurors on Tuesday, Santa Fe, N.M.-based lawyer John Day noted that the area's demographics will be key to how jury members interpret the case.

"It's going to be a clash of the gun culture here, where a lot of people were raised around guns and know gun safety and might be familiar with the concept that if you have a real gun, no matter who hands it to you, you're responsible for what comes out of the other end of the barrel," he said, "versus people who weren't raised here or around hunting and guns, and therefore might be more amenable to the idea that a film set is not like real life, because, on a film set they're telling you what to wear, they're combing your hair, putting on your makeup, bringing you coffee and telling you where to stand. So, when somebody hands you a gun and says this is safe to use, why do you have any reason to doubt that?"

"It's going to be a clash of the gun culture here, where a lot of people were raised around guns and know gun safety and might be familiar with the concept that if you have a real gun, no matter who hands it to you, you're responsible for what comes out of the other end of the barrel, versus people who weren't raised here or around hunting and guns."

John Day, a Santa Fe, N.M.-based lawyer

Is asking for a beer glass 'dreadfully rude' when you're a guest at a gathering?

Miss Manners

JUDITH MARTIN, JACOBINA MARTIN AND NICHOLAS IVOR MARTIN

If I'm drinking good beer, I like to let it breathe in a glass or even a plastic cup. I accepted a beer from the host, and then — thinking there might be cups available that I just didn't see — asked for a cup or glass. The host said sure, walked about 10 feet into his kitchen and returned

with a glass. The beer tasted wonderful. But when we got home, my wife told me that I was dreadfully rude and that I should have overlooked my preference for a beer that breathed in consideration of the host. I disagreed, pointing out that if the situation were reversed, I would gladly get a cup or glass for my guests. Who's right?

There you go, ruining it for the rest of us. Had you asked that the birthday cake be served on a gold plate, your wife would have had a point: It is impolite to make

unreasonable requests of one's host. Miss Manners does not consider a glass unreasonable — a point that would have been easier to make had you kept to yourself the part about it making the beer taste better.

Dear Miss Manners: I take long walks around my apartment complex every morning. So do many others. Everyone seems to feel obligated to greet each other with "good morning" as they pass, which happens with such great frequency that I am distracted from my pacing and my thoughts. Most of these people are complete strangers to me, and I

want to keep it that way, lest I get trapped in many conversations when I am trying to exercise.

Even if Miss Manners were inclined to help you — presumably by stamping out all attempts at casual politeness — would you still not be distracted by the need to growl at each passerby?

A simple nod without breaking your stride will, instead, satisfy the dictates of basic politeness, and seems to run a low risk of creating deep or lasting friendships.

Dear Miss Manners: We invited

my child's classmate to join us for a week at a rental place at the beach. He is a huge eater, as large, growing, football-playing middle school boys tend to be.

I find myself left with some residual resentment because his mom didn't send him with any spending money, let alone send along some cookies or otherwise offer to contribute something to the cost of the trip.

When I dropped him off, neither she nor he said "thank you." They got in their car and drove away, never mentioning the trip again. I'm feeling reluctant to include him in the future, though I feel bad for this unkindness.

Not issuing a future invitation is not an unkindness — nor is assuming, as they did, that the host will provide for the guest. Though Miss Manners agrees that failing to say "thank you" is a justifiable reason not to extend more invitations.

New Miss Manners columns are posted Monday through Saturday on washingtonpost.com/advice. You can send questions to Miss Manners at her website, missmanners.com. You can also follow her @RealMissManners.

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MOVIE DIRECTORY

Thursday, July 11, 2024

(I) No Pass/No Discount Ticket

www.washingtonpost.com/movies

DISTRICT

AMC Georgetown 14
3111 K Street N.W. (R) CC: 11:30-4:15-7:15-10:00
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 9:00
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 6:30
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 1:30-4:00-6:30-9:00-11:30-12:30-3:00-5:30-8:00-10:30
MaXXine (R) CC: 12:20-2:00-4:45-7:40-10:15
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 9:15
Robot Dreams (R) CC: 11:30AM
The Bikeriders (R) CC: 6:20
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:00-8:20-9:40
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 12:10-2:30
Touch (R) CC: 2:00-4:50-7:20-10:10
Thelma (PG-13) CC: 12:00
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 11:40-4:40
Despicable Me 4: The IMAX Experience (PG) CC: 12:15-2:45-5:15-7:45-10:20
Kinds of Kindness (R) CC: 12:40-2:30-6:00-9:30
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:10-9:10
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 11:45-4:10
Inside Out 2 3D (PG) CC: 2:10-7:10
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 11:50-2:20-4:50-7:30-10:10
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) CC: 3:00-5:20-7:40
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 12:50-3:20-5:50-9:40
Alamo Drafthouse Cinema - DC Bryant Street
630 Rhode Island Ave NE
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 12:00-1:30-3:15-6:30-9:45
Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation (PG) 11:45AM
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 1:15-4:15-7:15-10:15-10:45
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 12:00-3:00-6:00
MaXXine (R) 12:15-1:00-4:45-7:45-9:30-11:00
Kinds of Kindness (R) 2:45
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 2:15-4:00-5:00-10:00
Longlegs (R) 7:00-7:30-8:00-8:50-9:55
Angelika Pop-Up at Union Market
550 Penn Street NE - Unit E
Spirited Away (Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi) (PG) 11:00AM
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 12:30-4:35-7:15
JESUS: A Deaf Missions film 12:45
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:00-7:00
Avalon Theatre
5612 Connecticut Avenue
The Green Border (Zielona granica) 12:30-3:45-7:00
Thelma (PG-13) 12:15-2:35-5:00-7:30
Landmark Atlantic Plumbing Cinema
807 V Street Northwest
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 4:40-6:50
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 3:50-4:50-7:10
Inside Out 2 (PG) 4:00-5:00-6:30-7:30
MaXXine (R) 4:20-7:20
Longlegs (R) 7:00
Landmark E Street Cinema
555 11th Street Northwest
Inside Out 2 (PG) 3:15-4:30-7:15
MaXXine (R) 3:30-7:30
June Zero 4:15-7:25
The Bikeriders (R) 7:45
Thelma (PG-13) 3:45-6:30
Kinds of Kindness (R) 3:00-4:00-7:00-8:00
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:00-7:00
Regal Gallery Cinema
701 Seventh Street Northwest
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 12:10
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 10:50-1:04-4:10-4:50-7:50-9:55-10:25
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 11:00-12:00-12:30-1:00-1:30-2:30-3:30-4:00-5:00-5:30-6:00-6:30-9:00-10:00
Inside Out 2 (PG) 11:20-12:20-1:50-4:20-6:50-9:20
MaXXine (R) 11:10-1:55-4:40-7:20-10:10
The Bikeriders (R) 9:40
Kill (Hindi) (R) 8:50
Longlegs (R) 7:10-7:40-10:30
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 11:50-3:55-8:20
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) 11:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:10-6:40-9:50
Blue Lock The Movie - Episode Nagi- (PG-13) 2:40
Dandelion (R) 5:10-8:00-10:40
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) 11:40AM
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 11:20AM
Inside Out 2 (PG) 12:30-3:50-6:20

MARYLAND

AFJ Silver Theatre Cultural Center
8633 Calverville Road
Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964) (PG) 9:10
Love Me Up! The Me Down! (Atlanta) (NC-17) 9:00
Kinds of Kindness (R) CC: 5:00
Mickey One (1965) (NR) 12:00-7:00
The Green Border (Zielona granica) 12:05-3:05-6:05
Kinds of Kindness (R) 1:30-8:20
The Life of Oharu (Saikuru ichitai onna) (NR) 4:15
AMC Academy 8
6198 Greenbelt Road
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 1:20-4:10-6:50
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 12:50-3:15-5:45-8:15
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 1:30-4:00-6:30-9:00
MaXXine (R) CC: 1:45-4:40-7:10
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:00
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 2:45-5:15-7:45
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:00
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 1:00-4:00
Inside Out 2 3D (PG) CC: 4:30
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 10:15-1:00-3:50-6:35-10:10
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 10:10-12:00-2:30-5:00-7:30-10:30
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 11:40-2:10-4:35-7:00
If (PG) CC: 2:00
The Garfield Movie (PG) CC: 5:15
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 9:55-11:50-2:20-4:50-7:20-9:45
MaXXine (R) CC: 12:20-3:40-5:30-8:10-10:45
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 10:00AM
The Bikeriders (R) CC: 11:00AM
Longs (R) CC: 7:00-8:00-9:35-10:35
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:10-1:20-6:10-9:20
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) 10:45-1:10
Kinds of Kindness (R) CC: 10:00
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:30-9:40
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 12:40-4:00-7:10
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 10:05-12:30-2:55-5:20-7:45-10:20
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) CC: 3:00-4:40
AMC Center Park 8
4001 Powder Mill Rd
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 12:15-3:15-6:30-9:15
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 12:15-2:45-5:15-7:45-10:20
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 11:30-1:20-2:00-4:00-5:00-7:00-7:30-9:30
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 1:00-3:30-6:00-8:30
MaXXine (R) CC: 12:30-3:45-6:15-8:45
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:45AM
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:15-9:45
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 2:30
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 12:30-4:00
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:00-9:00
AMC Columbia 14
10300 Little Patuxent Parkway
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 2:00
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 11:10-1:00-4:25-6:35-9:20
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 12:00-2:30-5:00-7:30
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 11:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
MaXXine (R) CC: 11:10-1:50-4:25-7:10-9:45
Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu) 12:15
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:00-8:15-9:30
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:05AM
Touch (R) CC: 2:00-5:00-8:00
Thelma (PG-13) CC: 11:0AM
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 12:45-3:15
Despicable Me 4: The IMAX Experience (PG) CC: 11:00-1:30-4:00-6:30-9:00
Kinds of Kindness (R) CC: 11:20-3:00-6:20
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:00-9:00
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 11:50-3:05-6:10
Inside Out 2 3D (PG) CC: 11:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 12:15-10:15
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 2:45-5:15-7:45
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 11:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
If (PG) CC: 12:00

MaXXine (R) CC: 11:30-2:10-4:45-7:30-10:15
Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu) 5:05
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:30-8:45-10:15
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:45AM
Despicable Me 4: The IMAX Experience (PG) CC: 11:15-1:45-4:15-6:45-9:15
Touch (R) CC: 4:30
Thelma (PG-13) CC: 12:30-2:45-5:15-7:45-10:15
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 1:15
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:15-9:30
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 10:30-1:00-3:30-6:00-8:30
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 12:45-3:15-5:45-8:15
Inside Out 2 3D (PG) CC: 12:45-3:30-6:00-8:30
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) CC: 4:00-6:30-9:00
AMC Magic Johnson Capital Center 12
800 Stoppes Way
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 12:00-2:45-5:30-8:15
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 12:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 12:30-3:00-5:30-8:00
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 11:15-3:45-6:15-8:45
MaXXine (R) CC: 12:50-3:30-6:15-8:50
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 12:30-3:45
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:00-9:30
Kill (Hindi) (R) CC: 7:00-9:35
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 12:45-4:40-8:30
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 1:00-3:30-6:00-8:30
Despicable Me 4: The IMAX Experience (PG) CC: 12:00-2:30-5:00-7:30-10:00
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:10-9:15
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 12:00-3:10-6:20
Inside Out 2 3D (PG) CC: 12:15-2:45-5:15-7:45
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) CC: 3:00-5:20-7:40
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 10:00AM
The Bikeriders (R) CC: 11:00AM
Longs (R) CC: 7:00-8:00-9:35-10:35
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:10-1:20-6:10-9:20
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) 10:45-1:10
Kinds of Kindness (R) CC: 10:00
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:30-9:40
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 12:40-4:00-7:10
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 10:05-12:30-2:55-5:20-7:45-10:20
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) CC: 3:00-4:40
AMC Montgomery 16
701 Democracy Boulevard
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 12:30-3:30-6:30-9:30
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 1:30-4:15-7:00-9:30
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 11:15-12:30-4:30-5:45-7:15-9:45
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:10-9:15
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 12:00-3:10-6:20
Inside Out 2 3D (PG) CC: 12:15-2:45-5:15-7:45
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) CC: 3:00-5:20-7:40
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) CC: 3:00-5:20-7:40
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 9:30
MaXXine (R) CC: 11:20-2:20
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) 10:15
Longlegs (R) 7:40-8:30-10:20
Kill (Hindi) (R) 11:50-2:40
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 11:55AM
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 11:55AM
The Bikeriders (R) 10:50
Longlegs (R) 10:10
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 9:00-11:00
Touch (R) 5:00-8:00-11:00
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 9:40-12:10-2:40-5:10-7:40-10:10
MaXXine (R) 11:20-2:20
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13) 10:15
Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu) 3:15
Longlegs (R) 7:40-8:30-10:20
Kill (Hindi) (R) 11:50-2:40
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 11:55AM
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 11:55AM
The Bikeriders (R) 10:50
Longlegs (R) 10:10
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 9:00-11:00
Touch (R) 5:00-8:00-11:00
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 9:55-11:30-3:00-5:30-7:20-10:30
Kalki 2898 AD (Hindi) (Telugu) 8:50
Kinds of Kindness (R) 10:30-2:20
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:00-3:45-6:30-7:00-10:00-10:30
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) 9:55AM
Escape 9:55

Inside Out 2 3D (PG) 1:35
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) 3:00-5:15-7:30-9:45
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 9:20-10:50-12:50-1:20-1:40-2:20-3:00-3:50-4:10-5:00-5:50-6:20-8:00-8:20-9:50
Longlegs (R) 7:00-9:40
Indian 2 6:00-10:00
Cinépolis Gaithersburg
629 Center Point Way
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 6:00-9:15-10:00
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 1:15-4:15-7:45-10:45
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 1:00-1:45-2:00-3:45-4:30-4:50-6:30-7:15-9:30
Inside Out 2 (PG) 12:15-1:30-3:00-4:15-7:00-10:15
MaXXine (R) 1:00-4:45-7:45-10:45
Longlegs (R) 7:30-10:45
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 12:30-5:00-9:15
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:00-7:00-10:30
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) 12:00
Greenbelt Cinema
123 Calverway
Kung Fu Panda (PG) 1:00
Robot Dreams 7:15
The Bikeriders (R) 7:00
Landmark Bethesda Row Cinema
1725 Woodmont Avenue
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 12:30-3:05-6:50
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 12:30-1:30-2:45-4:00-5:00-6:00-7:15-8:15
Inside Out 2 (PG) 12:00-1:00-3:15-4:30-5:30-7:45
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 12:10
Thelma (PG-13) 12:15-3:30-7:20
Kinds of Kindness (R) 12:05-2:30-6:15
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:00-7:00
Landmark Annapolis Harbour Center
2474 Solomons Island Road Unit #1
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 12:15
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 11:50-2:30-5:05-7:30
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 11:25-12:00-1:00-2:15-3:15-4:25-5:25-6:40-7:40
Inside Out 2 (PG) 11:30-12:30-1:45-2:45-4:00-5:00-6:15-7:15
The Bikeriders (R) 11:50
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 11:35-3:20-7:00
Thelma (PG-13) 12:10-2:40-5:15-7:25
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:00-7:00
Phoenix Theatres Marlow 6
3899 Branch Avenue
Smurfs: The Lost Village (PG) 10:00AM
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 12:35-3:30-6:45-9:35
Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway (PG) 10:00AM
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 1:50
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 1:30-4:15-6:15-9:00
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 12:30-1:15-3:00-5:30-8:00-10:30
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 1:00-3:30-6:00-8:30
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 12:30-3:45-10:20
MaXXine (R) CC: 12:45-3:15-5:45-8:15-10:45
The Bikeriders (R) CC: 10:00
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:00-9:30
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:45AM
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:15-9:45
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 2:30
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 12:30-4:00
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:00-9:00
AMC St. Charles Town Ctr 9
11115 Mill Circle
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 1:30-4:15-6:15-9:00
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 12:30-1:15-3:00-5:30-8:00-10:30
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 1:00-3:30-6:00-8:30
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 12:30-3:45-10:20
MaXXine (R) CC: 12:30-3:45-6:15-8:45
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:45AM
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:15-9:45
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 2:30
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 12:30-4:00
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:00-9:00
AMC Columbia 14
10300 Little Patuxent Parkway
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 2:00
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) CC: 11:10-1:00-4:25-6:35-9:20
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 12:00-2:30-5:00-7:30
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 11:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
MaXXine (R) CC: 11:10-1:50-4:25-7:10-9:45
Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu) 12:15
Longlegs (R) CC: 7:00-8:15-9:30
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) CC: 11:05AM
Touch (R) CC: 2:00-5:00-8:00
Thelma (PG-13) CC: 11:0AM
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) CC: 12:45-3:15
Despicable Me 4: The IMAX Experience (PG) CC: 11:00-1:30-4:00-6:30-9:00
Kinds of Kindness (R) CC: 11:20-3:00-6:20
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) CC: 3:00-6:00-9:00
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) CC: 11:50-3:05-6:10
Inside Out 2 3D (PG) CC: 11:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) CC: 12:15-10:15
Despicable Me 4 (PG) CC: 2:45-5:15-7:45
Inside Out 2 (PG) CC: 11:30-2:00-4:30-7:00-9:30
If (PG) CC: 12:00

MaXXine (R) 11:50-2:40-5:40-8:20
Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu) 4:40-8:50
Longlegs (R) 7:00-9:40
Kill (Hindi) (R) 11:05-1:40-4:20
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 12:30-5:20-9:20
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) 5:00
Kalki 2898 AD (Hindi) (Telugu) 12:50
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:45-7:40
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) 11:20AM
Indian 2 6:05-10:05 6:00-9:55
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 1:20
Regal Hyattsville Royale
6505 Annapolis Boulevard
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 1:20-4:20
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 11:40-12:40-4:30-5:00-6:00-7:40-8:40-10:10
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 11:00-11:30-12:10-1:30-2:10-2:50-4:10-5:30-7:30-8:10-9:55
The Garfield Movie (PG) 11:10AM
Inside Out 2 (PG) 11:50-12:30-1:10-2:30-3:40-5:10-6:30-7:00-8:00-9:00-9:40
MaXXine (R) 11:20-2:00-4:40-7:20-10:00
Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu) 12:00
Longlegs (R) 7:10-9:45
Kill (Hindi) (R) 6:40-9:20
Horizon: An American Saga Chapter 1 (R) 11:15AM
Despicable Me 4 3D (PG) 4:50
Fly Me to the Moon (PG-13) 3:10-6:20-9:30
Dandelion (R) 4:00-6:50-9:50
Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (PG-13) 3:15
The Lion King 30th Anniversary (G) 3:00-5:50-8:20
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 12:50-3:30-6:10-8:50
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 2:20
Regal Laurel Towne Centre
4716 Baltimore Avenue
Bad Boys Ride or Die (R) 12:20-3:20-6:00-9:00
A Quiet Place: Day One (PG-13) 11:20-12:50-2:15-3:40-5:40-6:10-7:30-8:15
Despicable Me 4 (PG) 10:50-11:30-12:00-12:30-1:30-2:30-2:50-5:20-6:30-6:50-7:45-9:30-10:10
Inside Out

CLASSIC DOONESBURY



PICKLES



BRIAN CRANE

BRIDGE

N-S VULNERABLE
NORTH
A Q 10 5 3
10 3
A J 7
10 6 4
WEST
9 4
K Q 9 7
Q 10 4 3
Q J 5
EAST
J
J 8 6 5 2
K 8 2
9 8 7 2
SOUTH (D)
K 8 7 6 2
A 4
9 6 5
A K 3

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1 Pass 2 NT Pass
4 All Pass
Opening lead - 7

My cousin the Queen of Hearts brags that her card is supreme, the Queen of Diamonds told Alice at the Mad Hatter's game. Big deal. Even a deuce of clubs can win a trick if clubs are trumps. Yes, Alice said in a tone of polite disbelief. Surely, losing a trick can be better than winning one. Deal the cards and I'll show you, the Queen sniffed. When Alice played at four spades, West, the Hatter, led the king of hearts. Alice ducked, won the next heart and saw three more losers: a club and two diamonds. She drew trumps and led the A-K and a third club. The Hatter won and pondered. He had to break the diamonds to avoid conceding a ruff-suff. If he led low, Alice could succeed by playing low from dummy. Nor would leading the 10 beat the contract if Alice read the position. So with a nod to the Queen of Diamonds, the Hatter led the queen. Whatever Alice did, she would lose two diamonds. Down one. See what I mean? the Queen of Diamonds chortled.

DAILY QUESTION
You hold:
K 8 7 6 2 A 4
9 6 5 A K 3
Your partner opens one heart, you bid one spade and he jumps to three hearts. What do you say?
ANSWER: Partner's jump- rebid in his own suit shows a good six-card suit (rarely, a seven-card suit) and about 16 high-card points. If he has A 4, K Q J 9 6 2, A 3, Q 5 4, you might make a grand slam. To jump directly to six hearts would be reasonable. If you prefer to investigate for seven, cue-bid four clubs.

FRANK STEWART
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RED AND ROVER



AGNES



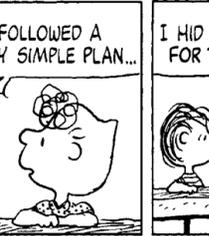
FRANK AND ERNEST



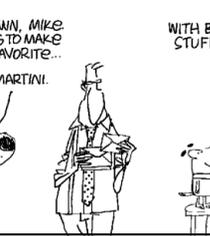
WUMO



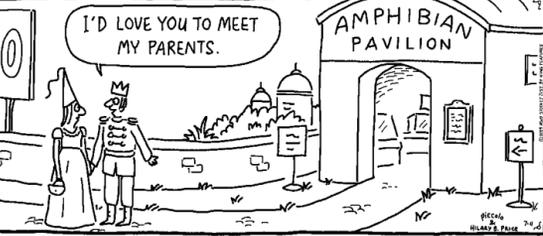
CLASSIC PEANUTS



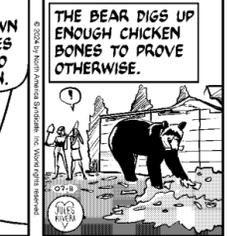
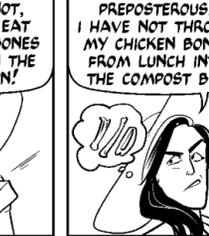
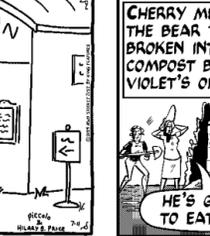
MIKE DU JOUR



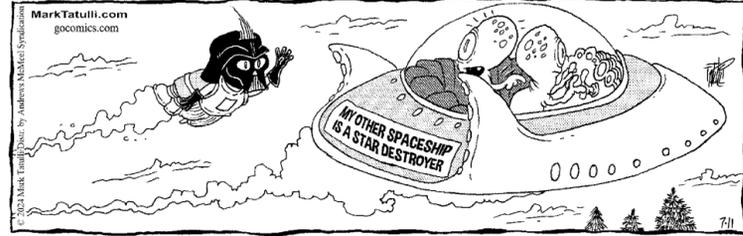
RHYMES WITH ORANGE



MARK TRAIL



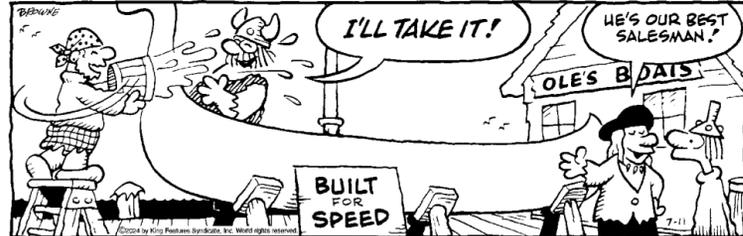
LIO



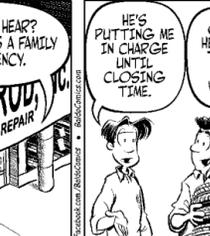
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



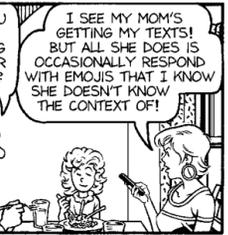
BALDO



BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

Sudoku grid with numbers and empty cells.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

SCRABBLE GRAMS

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Scrabble board with letter tiles and rack numbers.

PAR SCORE 145-155 BEST SCORE 225 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 scrgams@gmail.com

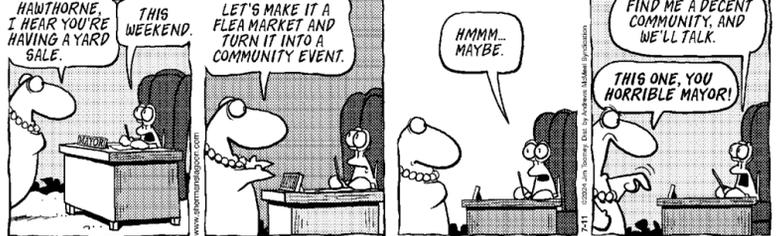
JUMBLE CROSSWORDS

Word search grid with numbers and letters.

CLUE ACROSS
1. Take in
5. ... up
6. Bumbling
7. Essay or dissertation
CLUE DOWN
1. On land
2. Greedy
3. Help, compensation
4. Free
ANSWER BOSRAB
ANSWER HLDEO
ANSWER ETIPN
ANSWER HSSTEI
ANSWER SHOERF
ANSWER EHSILS
ANSWER RSEAGSD
ANSWER RSAGIT
BONUS
CLUE: Stories about _____ date back more than 500 years.

How to play
Complete the crossword puzzle by looking at the clues and unscrambling the answers. When the puzzle is complete, unscramble the circled letters to solve the BONUS.
ANSWERS: A-Abacab
B-Holida
C-A-Hepp
D-7-A-Theris
E-10-A-Holde
F-20-Caplin
G-30-Kadree
H-4-Cranes
I-K-Rubin
J-Lood

SHERMAN'S LAGOON



CURTIS



BREWSTER ROCKIT: SPACE GUY!





PATRICK McDONNELL

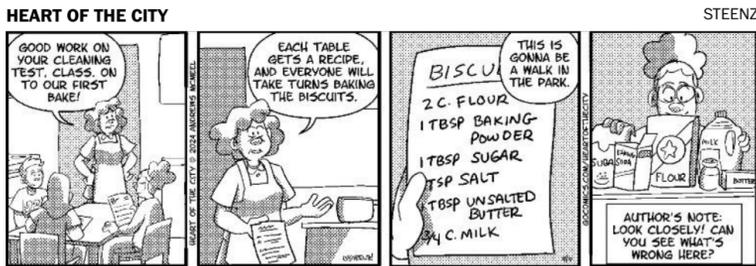


JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN

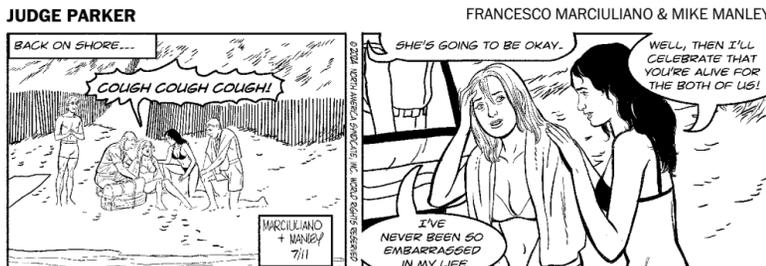
HOROSCOPE

BIRTHDAY | JULY 11

You are charming, easygoing and diplomatic. You also have excellent problem-solving skills. This year you will reap the benefits from your past efforts and work. Expect a promotion, an award, kudos or some kind of recognition. Bravo! You're in the spotlight.



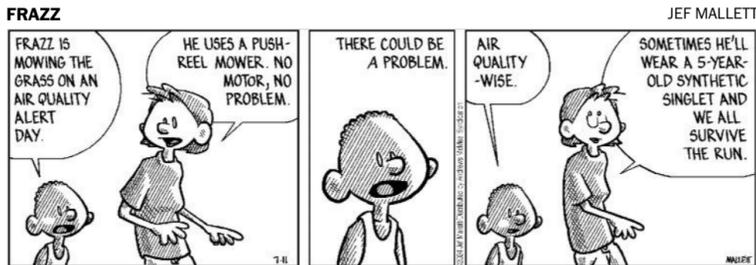
STEEN Z



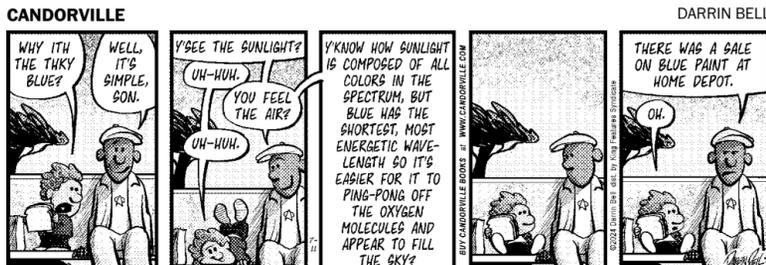
FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & MIKE MANLEY

MOON ALERT: Avoid shopping or important decisions from 9:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. today. After that, the Moon moves from Virgo into Libra.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19). This is a marvelous, social day for you. It's a great time to schmooze with others. Enjoy social outings, sports events and fun activities with kids. Meet friends for coffee, lunch or dinner, or join the gang for happy hour.



JEF MALLETT



DARRIN BELL

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20). You are high energy with Mars in your sign, plus you have a busy schedule. Surprise flirtations might catch you off guard today. You also might get an unexpected invitation. Meanwhile, this is the perfect day to entertain at home.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20). Interactions with siblings, relatives and daily contacts will be warm and friendly today. In fact, a romance or flirtation might strike up with someone. Meanwhile, stock the fridge, because something unpredictable could impact home and family today.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22). Your daily routine will change today for some reason. Unexpected contacts might surprise you. You might take an unexpected short trip. New faces and new places will be stimulating.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22). Today fair Venus is in your sign dancing with idealistic Neptune, which is the classic formula for love and romance. Enjoy schmoozing with others. New flirtations and relationships will begin for some of you.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22). Today the Moon is in your sign, which heightens your emotions. A surprise flirtation with someone "different" might be titillating. You might meet someone from another culture, or you might suddenly decide to travel.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22). This is a marvelous day to schmooze and enjoy the company of friends, groups and organizations. People admire you now, which means you will shine in the eyes of others. This is also one of the best date nights of the year!

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21). You make a marvelous impression on authority figures today, which includes parents, bosses, VIPs and the police. However, the impression you create is so attractive, some of you will strike up a flirtation with a boss or authority figure.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21). You're the traveler of the zodiac, and today is the perfect day to travel and meet new people from different backgrounds. In fact, you might develop a flirtation with someone from another culture.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19). You might meet someone interesting. Meanwhile, this is an excellent day for financial negotiations, especially discussions about how to share something like an inheritance, because you'll come out smelling like a rose!

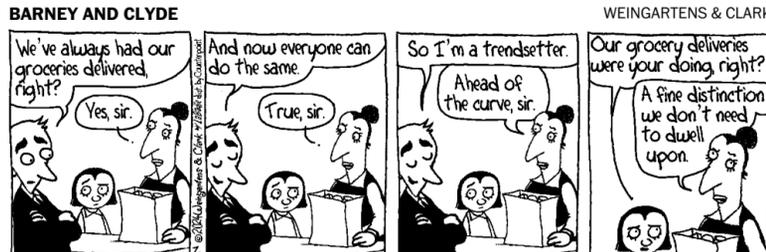
AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18). Enjoy schmoozing with partners and close friends today, as well as members of the general public. A subtle flirtation might make your day. This is the perfect day to socialize with others; however, double-check banking details.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20). This is a wonderful date day! Make time to socialize. Sports events, entertaining outings, the arts, the hospitality industry, fun activities with kids and hanging out with friends will all be excellent choices for you.

—Georgia Nicols
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JIM DAVIS



WEINGARTENS & CLARK



STEVE KELLEY & JEFF PARKER



DAN SCHKADE



SCOTT STANTIS



DAVE BLAZEK



WILEY



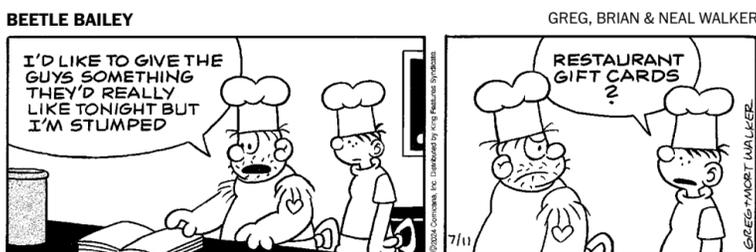
RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT



LINCOLN PEIRCE



BILL HOLBROOK



GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER



STEPHAN PASTIS

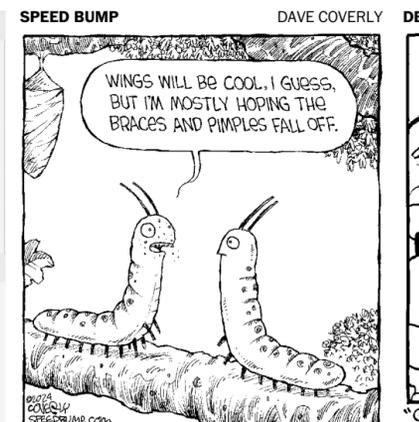
PREVIOUS SUDOKU SOLUTION

4	3	9	2	8	6	5	7	1
1	6	2	7	4	5	3	9	8
8	7	5	1	9	3	6	2	4
2	1	8	3	5	9	7	4	6
5	9	7	6	1	4	2	8	3
6	4	3	8	7	2	1	5	9
9	5	1	4	3	7	8	6	2
3	2	4	5	6	8	9	1	7
7	8	6	9	2	1	4	3	5

PREVIOUS SCRABBLEGRAMS SOLUTION

A	L	F	A	L	F	A
D	A	M	P	S	H	
F	I	R	E	D	O	G
I	N	T	A	C	T	

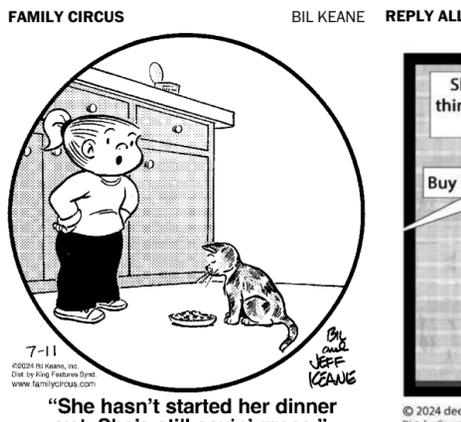
RSACK 1 = 63
RACK 2 = 71
RACK 3 = 74
RACK 4 = 8
TOTAL 216



DAVE COVERLY



H. KETCHAM



BIL KEANE

Should I buy thick yogurt, thin yogurt, or the one with pieces of fruit?

Buy ice cream.

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Cypress Hill brings 'Simpsons' joke to life with London orchestra

BY ADELA SULIMAN

LONDON — A joke made on “The Simpsons” television show almost 30 years ago became a reality in London on Wednesday night.

For the first time the U.S. hip-hop collective, Cypress Hill, performed at the Royal Albert Hall with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) for a one-off event.

The collaboration first featured in cartoon form in 1996 on an episode of “The Simpsons” titled “Homerpalooza.” The episode sees hapless patriarch Homer try to impress his children by attending the fictional “Hullabalooza” music festival with guests there including Cypress Hill.

One scene in the cartoon shows an assistant backstage address a room full of musicians: “Somebody ordered the London Symphony Orchestra. Possibly while high? Cypress Hill — I’m looking in your direction.” The band sheepishly admits it was probably them, and the British orchestra then begins playing

classical music to accompany the band’s hip-hop tones as Marge nods along approvingly, claiming: “Now this I like.”

After years of fan pressure to turn the fictional moment into a reality, it finally happened.

Cypress Hill planned to perform hits from its “revered album Black Sunday as well as other hits from their extensive back-catalogue,” according to the official event website.

“After years of fans hoping for such a collaboration to become reality, Cypress Hill reached out to the LSO over social media and so history will finally be made!” it said.

The classical orchestra was conducted by Troy Miller and featured “unique orchestral arrangements” of the group’s hits including “Insane in the Brain” and “I Wanna Get High.”

Band member B-Real tweeted a mock “Simpsons” poster for the event with the caption: “When life imitates art!!”

The California rap group Cypress Hill, which features members B-Real, Sen Dog, DJ Muggs and Bobo, found prominent fame



In the 1996 “Homerpalooza” episode of “The Simpsons,” Homer Simpson, foreground, attends a music festival that includes hip-hop collective Cypress Hill (from left, Sen D.O.G., B-Real and Deejay Muggs).

in the 1990s with its magnum opus LP “Black Sunday.” It has sold over 20 million albums worldwide, according to its website, earned a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and gained three Grammy Award nomina-

tions. The band told ITV London News this week in an interview that fan fever following “The Simpsons” episode had “infected us.”

“It immortalized us in ‘The

Simpsons’ universe ... and that was an honor in itself,” said B-Real. He called the collaboration a “bridge.”

“It’s showing the adaptability of hip-hop, which is made from every musical form, that it could

actually be re-created by the oldest form of music and put out there,” he added, referring to classical music.

Maxine Kwok, the first violinist of the orchestra told BBC radio: “I’m a huge fan of ‘The Simpsons’ ... I remember the episode well.”

Each time the episode was shown as a repeat in the United States or the United Kingdom it would lead to fresh social media pressure on the LSO to collaborate with the band, Kwok said.

The orchestra has been seriously considering it since 2017, she added, but now it’s “finally able to actually happen ... and people are just beyond excited,” said Kwok. She teased the concert was going to be “insane,” riffing off their popular song “Insane in the Brain.”

“The Simpsons” has earned a reputation for predicting, or giving birth to, real life events.

In an episode that aired in 2000, Lisa Simpson becomes president of the United States and claims: “We’ve inherited quite a budget crunch from President Trump,” predicting a Donald Trump presidency 17 years ahead of time. The show also depicted a U.S. win over Sweden in a Winter Olympics curling episode in 2010, something that happened in real life in 2018 at the PyeongChang games in South Korea, when the U.S. men’s curling team won gold for the first time in Olympic history.

A museum’s ‘Picassos’ sparked a gender war. Turns out they were fakes.

BY LEO SANDS

A “ladies-only” lounge. A gender discrimination claim. Picasso nudes hanging in the toilet.

These are some of the twists and turns of a bizarre saga involving Australia’s Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), which made global headlines this year for an exhibit of “several priceless Picassos” that banned the entry of men. One man successfully sued for discrimination, prompting the curators to move some of the paintings into a women’s bathroom in protest.

In the latest bizarre twist, the museum has revealed that the set of “Picassos” at the center of it all was never made by the surrealist Spanish artist — they were fake the whole time.

Kirsha Kaechele, the American artist and curator behind the exhibition — who is married to MONA’s owner — wrote in a Wednesday blog post that while gathering paintings for the exhibition, she “knew they had to be ‘Picassos,’” but couldn’t find one that worked.

“So I made the artworks, quite painstakingly, with my own hands,” Kaechele wrote on the museum’s website. Kaechele said she made the “Picassos” over three years ago with etching help from her manicurist’s niece.

“I knew of a number of Picasso paintings I could borrow from friends, but none of them were green and I wished for the Lounge to be monochrome,” she said. “I also had time working against me, not to mention the cost of insuring a Picasso—exorbitant!”

As of Wednesday, a reference to “several priceless Picassos” at the MONA lounge no longer appeared on the museum’s website. A spokeswoman for MONA declined to comment on whether the museum was aware that the works on display had been wrongly attributed to Pablo Picasso. Kaechele did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

Kaechele’s confession capped off months of drama that tested the boundaries of what counts as conceptual art and unlawful gen-



Kirsha Kaechele, the curator of a controversial exhibition at Australia’s Museum of Old and New Art that put a set of paintings in a women’s restroom, admitted that the purported Picasso pieces were actually painted by her.

der discrimination.

In 2020, MONA unveiled its “Ladies Lounge” exhibition, a space for anyone who identified as a woman separated from the rest of the museum by opulent green curtains with only one man allowed inside: the butler, tasked with serving the patrons. A staff member stationed outside prevented any visitor who did not identify as a woman from entering. And for an extra \$325, guests could indulge in a high tea service featuring finger food.

The museum advertised the “Ladies Lounge” as a place for “high society hobnobbing” under

Picasso’s shadow: “It’s inspired by Kirsha’s great-grandmother: a scandalous socialite who threw ladies-only parties at her Beverly Hills and Basel estates involving a fleet of devoted butlers, 400-year-old wines, and the occasional visit from Pablo Picasso (hold on to your champagne and caviar: several priceless Picassos furnish the lounge here at Mona, rummaged from great-granny’s attic.)”

Then, things got fiery. In March, one of the excluded men, Jason Lau, argued before Tasmania’s civil and administrative tribunal that the lounge violated anti-discrimination laws by refusing him entry

when he visited the museum.

“We won’t let men in,” Kaechele said in a telephone interview with The Washington Post during the proceedings. At the same time, she said she “got a rise” out of the discrimination complaint. “It carries it out of the museum and into the real world,” she said.

MONA’s lawyers argued that the exclusion of men from the artwork was an acceptable form of discrimination because it “is part of the artwork itself.” But the court disagreed, ruling on April 9 that the museum had 28 days to stop refusing entry to the exhibition “by people who do not identify as

ladies.”

In response, MONA moved part of its collection to the women’s restroom. “I thought a few of the bathrooms in the museum could do with an update ... Some cubism in the cubicles. So I’ve relocated the Picassos,” Kaechele said in an email last month shared by a spokeswoman, Sara Gates-Matthews.

Kaechele said her admission that the works were fake came after pressure from a reporter and an “impeccably mannered” letter she said she received from the Picasso Administration.

In response to a request for

comment, the Paris-based Picasso Administration responded with an automatic email that said the office was closed until Sept. 2, and that “no requests will be processed during this period.”

In her blog post, Kaechele expressed surprise that no visitor had caught her out in the ruse — which lasted more than three years — sooner: “I imagined that a Picasso scholar, or maybe just someone who googles things, would visit the Ladies Lounge ... and expose me on social media.” The story about her family’s connection to Spanish surrealist was also false, Kaechele acknowledged: “I’m flattered that people believed my great-grandmother summered with Picasso at her Swiss chateau.”

Kaechele also described seeing the original version of one of her paintings at the Ladies Lounge at the Picasso Museum in Paris. A photograph taken in a MONA toilet shows an artwork similar to “Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe d’après Manet,” a real Picasso oil painting housed by the Picasso Museum in Paris.

MONA and its associated events have a history of unusual exhibitions that have sparked protest and debate: Its owner, David Walsh, has billed it a “subversive adult Disneyland.” Christians, animal rights groups and Indigenous people have protested against the museum over various planned works. Other exhibits have included a wall of sculpted vulvas based on women’s bodies, as well as a machine that mimics human digestion and defecates daily.

In her acknowledgment, Kaechele did not express regret — but did offer an apology to the Picasso Administration for causing any problems, adding that she had a huge amount of respect for the master.

“I am relieved I have told you because now we can revel together in this madness. Assuming you still want to speak to me. (I hope you can forgive me.)”

Frances Vinall and Rachel Pannett contributed to this report.

Is it controlling for a freelancer’s boyfriend to ask not to be written about?



Adapted from an online discussion.

Carolyn Hax

My boyfriend of eight months has requested that I not write about him anymore. He was initially okay with it, but he has read the handful of things I’ve published since we started dating and has changed his mind. I never say anything that reflects poorly on him or that I think he would find embarrassing; usually, if anything, I am self-deprecating. Before this relationship, I dated someone else for more than five years and wrote about that relationship freely with his

blessing. I actually think part of what my current boyfriend is uncomfortable about is the implied comparison between that relationship and this one.

My writing life will be quite a bit more difficult if I can’t write from life anymore. And he has already said no not just to articles that focus on our relationship, but also to ones that mention him in even a cursory way. It is an understandable request, but I can’t shake the feeling that it’s controlling and sabotaging, hopefully unintentionally.

How would you approach this? I really want to keep the boyfriend, but I also do not want to lose my creative outlet, which has been a real lifeline during the past couple of very weird years.

—Freelancer

Freelancer: His is a fair request. I wouldn’t want to be written about, either. I have some highly confessional writer friends



ILLUSTRATION BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

whose work I love and whose inner circles I wonder about all the time. How do they feel about this?

I also pour out thousands of words here and say very little about my family. You know my dogs better than you know my people. But you know a fair amount about me. So, the line is a walkable one.

All that said: “the feeling that

it’s controlling and sabotaging” is serious enough that you can’t wisely discard it. Not without asking yourself where it came from.

Is your imagination getting carried away, as the “unintentionally” might suggest? Then get even more creative and write around it.

Or is there context to support your concerns?

If it’s the latter, then trust your gut.

Re: Private partner: Carolyn implied this, but I want to be more direct. Freelancer has a choice between writing about real life and the people in it, and this boyfriend. It is as simple as that.

Some people are happy sharing everything. Others value their privacy. Some, probably this boyfriend, don’t know exactly where they are on the spectrum until they read about themselves in publicly published material.

If you really like the guy, then you can try shifting the focus of your writing. What you cannot do is ask someone else to be someone they aren’t.

Sorry for whichever loss you are about to experience. If you are certain you can’t shift your writing, then you owe the boyfriend an honest conversation. Boyfriend could

make an effort, but there is little chance of succeeding in the long term if he is a private person at heart. Neither of you should pretend you can live some way that you can’t.

—Anonymous

Anonymous: Right, the clearer line is well-drawn, thanks. Pushing private-guy to agree to be written about is not on the menu.

And the menu isn’t on the menu if there’s any, any foundation for the controlling/sabotaging/resents-the-comparison hunch. If there’s one thing, then there’s usually something else.

Write to Carolyn Hax at tellme@washpost.com. Get her column delivered to your inbox each morning at wapo.st/gethax.

Join the discussion live at noon Fridays at washingtonpost.com/live-chats.

SOCCER

England rallies past the Netherlands and into the Euro final with a late stunner of a goal from Ollie Watkins. **D2**

PARIS OLYMPICS

The U.S. men's basketball team, which played Canada late last night, believes it has found a golden formula. **D3**

TENNIS

Wimbledon has been a heady run for the Italians, with Lorenzo Musetti joining Jasmine Paolini in the semis. **D8**



MIKE CAUDILL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Aaliyah Chavez, pictured playing on the AAU circuit in April, averaged 38 points for her high school in Lubbock, Tex., to claim national player of the year honors.

Forging her own path

The top high school prospect in the Class of 2025 is out to be more than the next Caitlin Clark

BY MICHAEL ERRIGO

HAMPTON, VA. — Aaliyah Chavez is planted in the corner of a large and crowded gymnasium, halfway through a shoe change, when a new group appears. It's another middle school travel team, this one from Florida. The younger girls eye Chavez from about 20 feet away, whispering among themselves as the high school basketball star quietly stuffs her gear into a backpack.

It's a Friday afternoon in late April, the opening hours of a weekend-long basket-

ball circus that arrives here every spring. The Boo Williams Sportsplex plays host to the first of three major showcase events for the Nike Elite Youth Basketball League, the top AAU girls' basketball circuit in the country. Every year, this four-court gym is filled with players, parents and college coaches who have come to see and be seen.

Chavez and her team, CyFair Elite, have just wrapped up their second win of the event's first day. When her shoes are on and her bag is packed, the 5-foot-11 Chavez stands and makes eye contact

with the group. She knows the girls have been watching her, and she knows what they want. She gives them a quick nod — a silent and subtle invitation to approach. The girls scurry over, phones at the ready.

"That happens a lot now," Chavez said later, a sheepish grin on her face. "Sometimes people just stare and I have to ask them if they want a picture. ... It's still a little surreal, but I'm getting used to it."

Chavez, the nation's top prospect in the Class of 2025, is a burgeoning basketball sensation. She scored 38 points per game

SEE CHAVEZ ON D5

Berhalter dismissed in wake of Copa flop

Exit in group stage costs U.S. men's soccer coach; no replacement is named

BY STEVEN GOFF

Gregg Berhalter is out as the U.S. men's national soccer team's coach — one year after his surprising reappointment, nine days after the Copa América flop and less than two years before the next World Cup.

The U.S. Soccer Federation announced Wednesday night that Berhalter had been fired and sporting director Matt Crocker had begun the search for a replacement. Berhalter had more than two years left on his contract but paid the price for the team's disappointing performance this summer.

"At the senior level, we've got to win," Crocker said in an interview with a group of reporters. "We know winning is the yardstick, and we didn't do that."

Berhalter, 50, had a 44-17-13 record in a tenure that ran from late 2018 through the 2022 World Cup in Qatar — where his team went unbeaten in group play and lost to the Netherlands in the round of 16 — and resumed last summer following an investigation of a domestic assault

SEE BERHALTER ON D6

Nats find no relief as their slide continues

METS 6, NATIONALS 2

Four-run sixth inning helps stretch skid to four

BY ANDREW GOLDEN

NEW YORK — Wednesday night's sixth inning presented a familiar scenario for Dave Martinez and his Washington Nationals. The game was in the balance, and the manager turned to his bullpen to get his team out of trouble.

The decision to bring in Derek Law made sense on the surface. The results showed just how fickle relievers can be from season to season.

Law, one of the most effective pitchers in the major leagues a year ago when it came to stranding inherited runners, has been Martinez's go-to guy in those situations this season. His 2024 results have been a far cry from what he managed in 2023. Wednesday's 6-2 loss to the New York Mets at Citi Field was just

SEE NATIONALS ON D5

Nationals at Mets
1 p.m., MASN

Atkins, Mystics halt Fever's comeback

MYSTICS 89, FEVER 84

BY KAREEM COPELAND

INDIANAPOLIS — With only socks on her feet, Ariel Atkins casually walked across the court at Gainbridge Fieldhouse for her pregame media responsibilities Wednesday. Maybe the two-time WNBA all-star knew she would need to save as much tread as possible for game time.

The Washington Mystics leaned on Atkins, who essentially carried her team across the

finish line as Caitlin Clark's Indiana Fever mounted a furious comeback after trailing by 22 late in the third quarter. Atkins scored an efficient 26 points in the Mystics' 89-84 victory, but many other things were necessary to keep the Fever at bay as Clark compiled an unprecedented stat line.

"Sometimes I don't notice them all, to be honest with you," Mystics Coach Eric Thibault said of Atkins's contributions. "... She just saves a lot of plays. She's a winner, man. She makes winning plays. She's a champion. She's a gold medalist. That's why everybody in that locker room has so

much respect for her."

Those plays came throughout Wednesday's game but especially in the fourth quarter. With just under a minute left and the Fever on a 14-0 run, Atkins hit a pull-up jumper from the elbow while falling down to put the Mystics up 87-82.

Then, after two Clark free throws made it a three-point game again, Atkins sneaked in to steal a jump ball that had been won by Fever center Aliyah Boston. Atkins fell to the court with

SEE MYSTICS ON D6

Aces at Mystics

Sunday, 3 p.m., Monumental



MICHAEL CONROY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ariel Atkins, left, scored 26 points, three off her season high, to help overcome a historic effort by the Fever's Caitlin Clark, center.

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THE DAY IN SPORTS

SOCCER

Spirit signs another international player

The Washington Spirit made its third international signing of the NWSL season, announcing Wednesday that it added Ivory Coast forward **Rosemonde Kouassi** on a four-year contract.

Kouassi, 22, spent the past three seasons with FC Fleury 91 in France's top division. She had 21 goals and 12 assists in 53 league appearances and helped Fleury reach the French Cup final in May.

"For me, I wanted to take a step forward and continue to progress, confront myself with a new challenge and a new league," Kouassi said in a news release from the Spirit. "I felt a very good feeling with [the Spirit] and the project corresponded in my opinion precisely to what I wanted to achieve."

The deal runs through the 2027 season. The transfer fee was not disclosed.

Kouassi, who reportedly had garnered interest from major clubs in France and England, is the latest African talent to move to the NWSL. Zambia's **Barbra Banda** (Orlando Pride) and Malawi's **Temwa Chawinga** (Kansas City Current) lead the league with 12 goals each, while Bay FC set the global transfer fee record when it signed Zambian forward **Racheal Kundananji** in February.

Typically deployed on the right wing, Kouassi will add depth to a prolific Spirit attack tied for the second-most goals (32) in the league.

"Rosemonde is an incredible attacking talent and will provide a new element to this club offensively," General Manager **Mark Krikorian** said in a statement. "She has been impressive in her play at the top level of the European game and we're thrilled to welcome her to DC."

Kouassi and English center back **Esme Morgan**, who signed with the Spirit last month, are eligible to join the team for training July 15 but will not appear on a game-day roster until the NWSL transfer window opens Aug. 1.

Leicy Santos, the standout attacker who signed with Washington after four seasons with Atlético Madrid, was named to Colombia's 18-player roster for the Paris Olympics and is not expected to join the Spirit until after the Games. The Olympic tournament runs until Aug. 10.

Under new coach **Jonatan Giráldez**, the Spirit (11-4-1) is third in the NWSL at the regular season break, which began Sunday and continues until Aug. 23. Six Washington players will be at the Olympics as players or alternates for their national teams.

The Spirit will play three games during the break as part of the NWSL x Liga MX Femenil Summer Cup, beginning July 28 against Gotham FC in Chester, Pa.

— *Ella Brockway*

Jefferson Lerma scored in the 39th minute, and Colombia played a man short for the entire second half in a 1-0 win over Uruguay in Charlotte to reach the Copa América final against **Lionel Messi** and Argentina.

Daniel Muñoz was ejected in first-half stoppage time for his second yellow card, but Colombia held on to reach the championship match for the first time since winning its only Copa title in 2001. Colombia extended its unbeaten streak to a team-record 28 games, one more than from 1992 to 1994 and the longest current streak in men's soccer.

After the match, **Darwin Núñez** and about a dozen Uruguay teammates went into the stands as fans brawled at Bank of America Stadium. After a physical and contentious match that included seven yellow cards and one red, a melee broke out behind the Uruguay bench after Mexican referee **César Ramos**'s final whistle.

Defending champion Argentina and Uruguay will meet Sunday night in Miami Gardens, Fla.

CYCLING

Vingegaard holds off top Tour rival Pogacar

Just three months ago, **Jonas Vingegaard** was in a hospital bed with broken ribs and a collapsed lung. On Wednesday, he beat rival **Tadej Pogacar** in a two-man sprint after a brutal day in the mountains.

Pogacar, the Tour de France leader, kept the yellow jersey, but it was the two-time defending champion who earned a

psychological victory at the end of an epic battle.

The pair left all of their rivals in their wake. Vingegaard, after closing a big gap to Pogacar in a brutal climb, outsprinted his rival to finish half a wheel ahead for the stage win in Le Lioran, France.

"It is of course very emotional for me, coming back from the crash," Vingegaard said while trying to hold back tears. "It means a lot. All the things I went through in the last three months, it makes you think of that."

Vingegaard was hospitalized for nearly two weeks in April following a high-speed crash in the Tour of the Basque Country.

He only resumed competitive racing at the Tour, and there were many questions about his form. His tremendous ride Wednesday showed he is more than ready to defend his title.

"I'm just happy to be here, and it means so much to win a stage, especially to win it for my family. They were there supporting me the whole time," Vingegaard said.

PRO BASKETBALL

Ex-NBA player pleads guilty in gambling case

Former NBA player **Jontay Porter** admitted that he schemed to take himself out of games for betting reasons, pleading guilty to a federal conspiracy crime in the scandal that got him banned from the league.

"I know what I did was wrong, unlawful, and I am deeply sorry," the former Toronto Raptors center said as he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

Echoing findings in an NBA investigation and allegations in a

prosecution of four others, Porter acknowledged that he agreed to withdraw early from games so that co-conspirators could win bets on his performance.

He did it, he said, "to get out from under large gambling debts."

Porter also told the court that he has undergone rehab for a gambling problem and remains in therapy.

Porter, 24, is free on \$250,000 bond while awaiting sentencing set for Dec. 18. ...

Nicolas Batum is returning to the Los Angeles Clippers, with the team signing the forward along with forward **Derrick Jones Jr.** and guard **Kevin Porter Jr.**

Batum played in 60 games for the Clippers and Philadelphia 76ers last season. He was part of the trade that brought **James**

Harden to the Clippers.

Batum, a 35-year-old Frenchman, is one of seven active NBA players with 10,000 points, 5,000 rebounds and 1,500 three-pointers. ...

Sabrina Ionescu scored 21 points and made a key block on the final possession. **Breanna Stewart** had 18 points and 14 rebounds, and the New York Liberty beat the Connecticut Sun, 71-68, in Uncasville, Conn., for sole possession of first place in the WNBA. ...

Chennedy Carter scored 19 points, **Angel Reese** secured her 14th straight double-double in the closing seconds to extend a WNBA record, and the Chicago Sky beat the visiting Atlanta Dream, 78-69. ...

Aja Wilson had 24 points and 20 rebounds for her first career 20-20 game as the Las Vegas Aces beat the host Seattle Storm,

84-79. It was the 21st 20-20 game in WNBA history. ...

Kahleah Copper scored 32 points — the seventh time she has had more than 30 this season — as the Phoenix Mercury defeated the visiting Dallas Wings, 100-84.

AUTO RACING

NASCAR fines Wallace for spat with Bowman

NASCAR fined **Bubba Wallace** \$50,000 for retaliatory contact against race winner **Alex Bowman** on the cool-down lap of the Chicago Street Race.

Wallace slammed Bowman's car and sent it into the wall. Bowman said after the race that he had spun Wallace during Sunday's event and the retaliation was warranted.

Bowman also advocated for Wallace not to be punished. Bowman said Wallace "has every right to be mad."

"I'd be mad, too," Bowman said. "I ruined his day. The restart was chaotic. I just made every wrong decision that I possibly could. I was fighting with my windshield wiper switch, trying to get it working, and I couldn't get it working. I was focused on that [and] missed the corner."

Wallace's window net was down when he slammed into Bowman after the race, and the camera inside Bowman's car showed the driver was jostled by the hit.

NASCAR also plans to speak with **Chase Elliott** for his contact with **Daniel Suarez** after Sunday's race.

OLYMPICS

Women are majority on Team USA roster

For the fourth consecutive Summer Olympics, Team USA will be sending a roster featuring more women than men.

The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee announced the 592-member contingent that's heading to the Paris later this month. The lineup features 314 women and 278 men, spanning ages from 16 to 59 and representing 46 states.

There are 66 Olympic champions who have earned a combined 110 gold medals and three five-time Olympians: basketball standout **Diana Taurasi** along with equestrians **Steffen Peters** and **McLain Ward**.

Team USA is the favorite to top the medal table, with Nielsen's Gracenote forecasting 123 total medals, 37 of them gold. ...

Canada finalized its men's basketball roster for the Paris Olympics, with eight of the 12 players selected having been part of the run to a bronze medal at last summer's FIBA World Cup.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, **Dillon Brooks**, **Kelly Olynyk**, **Luguentz Dort**, **Nickel Alexander-Walker**, **RJ Barrett**, **Dwight Powell** and **Melvin Ejim** are the eight Olympians who were on the World Cup roster a year ago, when Canada won a wild bronze medal game over the United States, 127-118, in overtime. It was Canada's most significant international medal since it won silver at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

The four players on the Canadian Olympic team who weren't part of the World Cup are **Jamal Murray**, **Khem Birch**, **Trey Lyles** and **Andrew Nembhard**.

RUNNING

Kenya's Cherono given seven-year doping ban

Kenyan runner **Lawrence Cherono**, a former winner of the Boston and Chicago marathons, was banned for seven years for doping and trying to use fake documents to explain his failed drug test.

Cherono tested positive for the banned substance trimetazidine in 2022 and was suspended just before he was set to compete at the world championships in Eugene, Ore.

He won the Boston and Chicago marathons in 2019, and his personal-best time of 2 hours 3 minutes 4 seconds from 2020 remains the 12th fastest in history. The ban is backdated to the start of his provisional suspension in 2022, but Cherono is 35, so it could still end his top-level career.

In a case that took nearly two years to reach a final verdict, the Athletics Integrity Unit said Cherono had been banned for the original positive test and for "tampering" with the anti-doping process in his attempts to explain it away.

— *From news services and staff reports*

SPOTLIGHT: SOCCER



KAI PFAFFENBACH/REUTERS

Harry Kane, top, and his late replacement, Ollie Watkins, both scored to give England a lift and delight King Charles III.

England's dramatic rally is fit for a king

BY STEVE DOUGLAS

DORTMUND, GERMANY — England is into another European Championship final after its latest dramatic, come-from-behind win took even King Charles III on a roller-coaster ride.

Ollie Watkins — a substitute for captain Harry Kane, who had scored earlier — struck in the first minute of second-half stoppage time to give England a 2-1 win over the Netherlands on Wednesday and a shot at Spain in the title match Sunday.

In the knockout stage at Euro 2024, England has gotten a stoppage-time equalizer from Jude Bellingham before edging past Slovakia in extra time in the round of 16 and needed a penalty shootout to see off Switzerland in the quarterfinals. England is keeping its supporters back home on the edge of their seats — and that includes its monarch.

"If I may encourage you to secure victory before the need for any last minute wonder-goals or another penalties drama, I am sure the stresses on the nation's collective heart rate and blood

ENGLAND 2, NETHERLANDS 1

Watkins scores the winner, setting up a final against Spain

pressure would be greatly alleviated!" the king said in a congratulatory message soon after the game in Dortmund.

Watkins had made just one previous appearance at Euro 2024 — as a substitute in a group-stage game against Denmark — so it was a surprise when he was introduced by Manager Gareth Southgate in the 80th minute in England's biggest match so far.

The gamble paid off. Fed by another substitute in Cole Palmer, Watkins took a touch with his back to the goal just inside the area and, from a tight angle, smashed a fierce shot into the bottom corner.

"Unbelievable — I've been waiting for that moment for weeks," said Watkins, the Aston Villa striker who was tied for fourth in scoring in the English Premier

TELEVISION AND RADIO

MLB	
1 p.m.	Washington at New York Mets » MASN, WJFK (106.7 FM), WDCN (87.7 FM)
1 p.m.	Colorado at Cincinnati » MLB Network
6 p.m.	Los Angeles Dodgers at Philadelphia » MLB Network
6:30 p.m.	Chicago Cubs at Baltimore » MASN, WYYY (97.9 FM), WSBN (630 AM)
10 p.m.	Atlanta at Arizona » MLB Network (joined in progress)

GOLF	
6 a.m.	LPGA Tour: Evian Championship, first round » Golf Channel
10:30 a.m.	DP World Tour/PGA Tour: Scottish Open, first round » Golf Channel
2 p.m.	PGA Tour Champions: Kaulig Companies Championship, first round » Golf Channel
4:30 p.m.	PGA Tour: ISCO Championship, first round » Golf Channel

TENNIS	
8 a.m.	Wimbledon, women's semifinals » ESPN
1 p.m.	Wimbledon, mixed doubles final » ESPN

OLYMPICS

USA Basketball's gold medal formula mixes star power, frontcourt strength

BY BEN GOLLIVER

LAS VEGAS — LeBron James called Stephen Curry last fall with a simple proposition: Let's go to France together.

The basketball megastars had known each other since James, then 23, made a point to watch Curry, who had just turned 20, play for Davidson in the 2008 NCAA tournament. From 2015 to 2018, their friendship turned into a healthy rivalry as James's Cleveland Cavaliers and Curry's Golden State Warriors became the first teams in NBA history to face off in four consecutive Finals. Though both had represented the United States at major international tournaments, they were never on the same team unless it was an NBA All-Star Game.

What's more, James had won Olympic gold with Kevin Durant, and Curry had teamed with the 35-year-old Phoenix Suns star to win a pair of championships with the Warriors. The 2024 Paris Olympics, the trio realized, was an opportunity to join forces for the first time and put their many Finals battles behind them.

"I'm looking forward to being off the floor with Steph and being able to enjoy those moments," the 39-year-old James said Sunday as he participated in USA Basketball's four-day Olympic training camp. "The game of basketball doesn't last forever. You don't want to have a relationship f---ed up by [the media making it out to be] 'LeBron versus Steph — they should never smile, and they should hate each other.' As much as me and KD have gone head-to-head and me and Steph have gone head-to-head, I'm able to not listen to the false narratives."

James, the Los Angeles Lakers star who hasn't played internationally since 2012, said he first checked with his wife, Savannah, who gave her blessing for the summer abroad. Curry was lured by the chance to win his first Olympic gold medal and to play for Steve Kerr, his coach with the Warriors. Durant didn't need any convincing: After he led the Americans' triumph at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, victory in Paris would make him the first men's basketball player to win four Olympic golds.

"He's almost 40 years old, and he's still playing at an elite level," Durant said of James. "That's inspiring to me. . . . I know it's important to a lot of people to be the only man to do [something historic]. That stuff never really moved me. The journey is what's cool to me. Just knowing I have these memories to lean back on at any time is cooler than looking at the medals or championship trophies."



The U.S. men's basketball team bound for Paris mingled with Vice President Harris during a break at training camp Tuesday in Las Vegas.

With those three committed, soon enough USA Basketball had compiled one of the deepest and most accomplished rosters in its illustrious history. Even after replacing six-time all-star Kawhi Leonard, who had been working back from a knee injury, with Derrick White on Wednesday, the Americans have 11 players who have earned all-star nods, four former NBA MVPs, three former Finals MVPs and seven players who have won NBA titles. And then there are Kerr and assistants Erik Spoelstra and Tyronn Lue, who have combined to coach seven NBA championship teams since 2012.

The Americans will bring an embarrassment of riches to Paris as they seek their fifth consecutive gold medal. After completing training camp Tuesday, Kerr's team will play five exhibition games before its Olympic opener against Serbia on July 28. The first tuneup was Wednesday night against Canada at T-Mobile Arena. (The game ended too late for this edition.)

To win gold Aug. 10, the Americans must advance out of a four-team group and then win three consecutive games in the knock-



Jayson Tatum, center top, of the NBA champion Celtics battled for a loose ball during a scrimmage against a select squad Monday.

out round. France, Canada and Serbia are among the medal contenders in the 12-team field, but the Americans are the overwhelming favorites.

"Do you see this team?" Miami Heat center Bam Adebayo exclaimed. "The rest of the world is trying to catch up, but if you put a team like this together and we play the right way, it's going to be

hard to beat us."

The buzz around the team is at its highest point since Kobe Bryant, James and Durant won gold at the 2012 London Olympics. Hundreds of fans have lurked at the Bellagio Hotel and Casino, screaming in delight when Curry and Durant work their way through USA Basketball's makeshift headquarters. Autograph

hounds braved 117-degree heat on the final day of camp, and upper-bowl tickets for Wednesday's exhibition were listed for more than \$500 on resale sites. Vice President Harris even made a cameo at Tuesday's practice, shaking hands with James and posing for photographs with Curry.

"It's a really cool vibe," Curry said. "I had first-practice jitters, and I'm sure I'll have it for the first game. There's a surrealness of who is on this team and all the battles we've had over the course of our careers. [James, Durant and I] get to put that energy together as teammates. This will probably be my only time having this experience."

Facing ever-present gold-or-bust expectations, Grant Hill, USA Basketball's managing director, and Kerr sought substance to complement the superstar sizzle. At the Tokyo Olympics and the 2023 FIBA World Cup, the Americans fielded versatile but undersized teams that occasionally looked overmatched.

The Americans lost to France in their opener in Tokyo before winning a rematch in the gold medal game. At the World Cup, the heavily favored Americans suffered

losses to Lithuania, Germany and Canada while finishing a disappointing fourth.

When Kerr brought this team together, he screened video from the World Cup losses to help explain what had to change. A survey of this year's competition only reinforced the need to add front-court reinforcements. France will deploy Victor Wembanyama, the unanimous rookie of the year, and Rudy Gobert, the defensive player of the year, in an imposing combination. Serbia is expected to be led by three-time MVP center Nikola Jokic, and Greece boasts two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo.

To prepare for those matchups, USA Basketball recruited Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid, who also was eligible to play for France and Cameroon. Embiid, the 2023 MVP, will team with Anthony Davis and Adebayo to form an excellent interior rotation. Given that all of them are comfortable on the perimeter, Kerr will be able to deploy super-sized lineups with two of the three playing together.

"It's hard to bully me," Embiid said. "It's hard to bully [Davis and Adebayo]. I'm just excited to get the ball in the post and have Steph, KD and LeBron cutting."

The Americans have excellent size across the board. Kerr can deploy the 6-foot-9 James as a point forward when he wants to ramp up the pressure, and Durant will be joined on the wings by Jayson Tatum, who has excellent length and physicality. Jrue Holiday and White serve as sturdy defensive-minded complements to Curry and pass-first point guard Tyrese Haliburton in the backcourt, while Anthony Edwards and Devin Booker round out the roster as scoring guards who can space the court.

James joked that USA Basketball has assembled "the greatest AAU team of all time," but Kerr is bracing for "an enormous challenge." He made it clear that he and Curry "won't be playing 36 holes of golf on game days," as Coach Chuck Daly and Michael Jordan famously did as the Dream Team waltzed through the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

In a reminder that unforeseen challenges can surface, Durant suffered a minor calf injury that sidelined him for training camp and Leonard departed before the first exhibition. Still, the Americans will journey to Paris with high hopes and immense faith in their headliners.

"We've got LeBron, KD and Steph," Edwards said. "I don't feel like nobody can beat those three by themselves on the court. You mix in two of us regular guys, and we'll be all right."

To win with women at Paris Games, NBC calls on 'Call Her Daddy' host Cooper

BY BEN STRAUSS

During the recent prime-time telecast of the U.S. gymnastics trials leading up to the Paris Olympics, Mike Tirico, a mainstay of NBC's coverage, told viewers to get ready for something special from the world's most popular female podcaster, Alex Cooper.

Cooper, 29, rose to fame with her raunchy ruminations about dating, sex and life in New York City, but she's not yet a household name for Olympics fans. So Tirico, a veteran sports commentator who also happens to be a middle-aged man, tried an introduction. When he noted to viewers that Cooper's fans are known as the "Daddy Gang," some portions of the internet, well, took note.

This, both NBC and Cooper said, is the point.

"It was insane," Cooper said in an interview Monday. "We have our own little language on that side of the internet, and to see the legend Mike Tirico say 'Daddy Gang,' I mean, my DMs were flooded. Like, I thought I was hallucinating: 'Alex, a man on national television just said 'Daddy Gang.'"

The past two iterations of the Olympics in Tokyo and Beijing, interrupted by the pandemic, did not capture American audiences. To make the Paris Games feel bigger, and to recapture the event's cultural cachet, NBC is leaning heavily on celebrity.

In addition to Cooper and her starring role on NBC's streaming service, Peacock, the network is rolling out some boldface names: Peyton Manning and Kelly Clarkson will host the Opening Ceremonies; Kevin Hart and Kenan Thompson are doing a highlights show (also on Peacock); Cardi B is doing promos; Snoop Dogg will be a track and field correspondent. "They're about to get



Alex Cooper, host of the popular podcast "Call Her Daddy," will host Olympic soccer and gymnastics watch-alongs on Peacock this summer.

to dippin', rippin', ridin', slippin' and hopefully not slidin'," he said of a group of runners during one race at the trials.

After the 2022 Games, NBC executives conducted market research tests and found that around one-third of people said celebrity drives their conversation with friends. That was especially noteworthy for the Olympics, where so many of the athletes are not household names.

Cooper is a celebrity in a different demographic: young women. She launched "Call Her Daddy" in 2018 with her then-

friend and roommate Sofia Franklyn. The podcast began following the ignominious end of Cooper's relationship with an MLB player reported to be then-New York Mets ace Noah Syndergaard. Barstool quickly acquired the podcast, and it exploded in popularity before the hosts had a falling-out and Cooper eventually took the podcast, alone, to Spotify in a deal reportedly worth \$60 million over three years.

The show has evolved, adding meditations on mental health, positive thinking and female em-

powerment with guests such as Gwyneth Paltrow and Jane Fonda. Last year, it was Spotify's second-most-popular podcast after Joe Rogan's.

In Paris, Cooper will host several "watch-alongs" on Peacock that will accompany the main NBC feed. They will include companion telecasts for a U.S. women's soccer game and the gymnastics all-around competition. She will host celebrities, will answer questions and probably will appear across NBC's social media channels and other NBC shows. She may record an epi-

sode or two of "Call Her Daddy."

Molly Solomon, head of NBC's Olympic production, said she learned about Cooper a couple of years ago when her daughters introduced her to the podcast. ("I hope they weren't listening [at the beginning]," Solomon joked.) Last year, Cooper's agency pitched her to Solomon as an Olympics contributor.

The fit was obvious, Solomon said, because the Olympics, unlike the vast majority of major sporting events, has a majority female audience. That means Cooper's listeners are potentially

both NBC's current and future viewers.

"We know that women in their 20s are watching less television, and they're on their phones and on social media and listening to podcasts," Solomon said. "How do we convert them into Olympic fans?"

She added: "Alex has an incredible mind for knowing what young women want to talk about or listen to. I think she's this generation's Oprah."

Cooper brings some sports bona fides, too. She played soccer at Boston University, and her father was a sports TV producer. She already has done a big sit-down interview for NBC with Simone Biles, the Olympics' biggest star — and a "Call Her Daddy" listener.

"One of the first things that Simone said to me was, 'This is the most excited I've been for an interview in my life, and I'm so excited to meet you, and I'm the biggest fan,'" Cooper said. "And I'm like, 'Wait, no, I'm the biggest fan.'"

The Olympics are also part of a larger mainstream pivot for Cooper. She launched her own media company, Trending, with her husband, film producer Matt Kaplan, last year. Her exclusive deal with Spotify ended this year, and she is in the midst of plotting her next move.

"When you think about [the Olympics] show, the idea is to bring guests on so that a young woman and her dad could sit down and watch my show together," Cooper said.

That is a long way from the earliest days of "Call Her Daddy." But that's also the point.

"I think I'm growing up," Cooper said. "I was very adamant about focusing on appealing to young women [in the beginning]. I think it's okay to expand and to open the doors for other people to join the conversation."

BASEBALL

National League

EAST	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	STR
Philadelphia	60	32	.652	—	6-4	W-2
x-Atlanta	51	39	.567	8	6-4	W-4
New York	46	45	.505	13½	6-4	W-2
Washington	42	51	.452	18½	3-7	L-4
Miami	32	60	.348	28	3-7	L-2

Mets 6, Nationals 2

NATIONALS	AB	R	H	BIBBSOAVG
Abrams ss.....	3	0	0	1.274
Wood lf.....	3	0	0	2.250
Wright dh.....	3	0	0	1.264
Ruiz c.....	4	1	0	0.224
García 2b.....	4	1	0	0.177
Thomas rf.....	3	1	0	0.1243
Yepez 1b.....	4	0	1	0.292
Vargas 3b.....	3	0	1	0.251
J. Young 3b.....	0	0	0	1.255
TOTALS	31	2	5	1 3 8

METS	AB	R	H	BIBBSOAVG
Lindor ss.....	4	0	0	0.1251
Nimmo lf.....	4	1	1	0.252
Martínez dh.....	4	1	0	3.264
Alonso 1b.....	1	2	0	0.240
Vientos 3b.....	3	1	2	1.0.293
Alvarez c.....	2	0	1	0.2.301
Iglesias 2b-3b.....	4	2	3	2.0.338
Taylor rf.....	4	2	2	1.0.1.232
Bader cf.....	4	0	0	0.1.275
TOTALS	33	6	12	5 3 6

WASHINGTON 00 200 00 — 2 5 1
NEW YORK.....100 004 01X — 6 12 1

E: García (3), Taylor (3). **LOB:** Washington 7, New York 6. **2B:** García (17), Vientos 2 (10), Iglesias (7). **3B:** Taylor (3). **HR:** Nimmo (16), off Corbin. **RBI:** Yepez (2), Nimmo (59), Vientos (8), Iglesias (2), Taylor (23). **SB:** Vargas (6), Thomas (22). **CS:** Wood (2).

NATIONALS IP H R ERBB SONPERA
Corbin.....5 8 4 4 1 5 735.57
Law.....1 2 1 0 1 0 173.29
Floro.....1 0 0 0 0 1 102.01
Barnes.....1 2 1 1 1 0 253.89

METS IP H R ERBB SONPERA
Severino.....6½ 4 2 2 3 4 923.78
Diekmann.....¾ 0 0 0 0 2 114.94
D. Young.....¾ 1 0 0 0 0 134.85
Buttó.....1½ 0 0 0 0 2 152.72

WP: Severino (6-3); LP: Corbin (1-9);
S: Bhatti (1). **Inherited runners-scored:** Law 2-2, Diekmann 1-0, Buttó 1-0.
HBP: Severino 2 (Wood, Thomas).
T: 2:24. A: 24,887 (42,136).

HOW THEY SCORED

METS FIRST
Francisco Lindor strikes out swinging. Brandon Nimmo homers. J.D. Martínez strikes out swinging. Pete Alonso singles. Mark Vientos pops out.

NATIONALS 6
NATIONALS FOURTH
Jesse Winker grounds out. Keibert Ruiz singles. Luis García strikes out. Lane Thomas singles. Keibert Ruiz to second. Juan Pérez singles. Keibert Ruiz scores, throwing error by Tyrone Taylor. Lane Thomas scores, Yepez advances to second. Ildemaro Vargas singles. Juan Yepez to third. Ildemaro Vargas steals second base. Jacob Young lines out.

National 2, Mets 1
METS SIXTH
J.D. Martínez singles. Pete Alonso singles, advances to second. J.D. Martínez to third. Mark Vientos doubles. Pete Alonso to third. J.D. Martínez scores. Francisco Alvarez walks. Jose Iglesias singles, advances to second. Francisco Alvarez out at third. Mark Vientos scores. Pete Alonso scores. Tyrone Taylor singles. Harrison Bader hits into a force out. Tyrone Taylor out at second. Jose Iglesias scores. Throwing error by Luis García. Francisco Lindor grounds out.

Mets 5, Nationals 2
METS EIGHTH
Mark Vientos walks. Francisco Alvarez grounds into double play. Jeff McNeil out at second. Jose Iglesias doubles. Tyrone Taylor triples. Jose Iglesias scores. Harrison Bader lines out.

Mets 6, Nationals 2
NATIONALS' LEADERS
Entering Thursday's game

Batters	Avg	H	ZB	HR	BI	BB	SB
Call	.313	5	1	0	1	3	1
Yepez	.292	7	3	0	2	2	0
García	.277	82	17	10	44	14	12
Abrams	.274	92	21	14	46	30	14
Walker	.264	75	17	10	41	47	12
Young	.255	66	13	1	18	16	20
Vargas	.251	42	12	1	20	14	6
Wood	.250	9	1	0	6	6	1
Thomas	.243	62	10	3	37	22	22
Adams	.235	20	5	2	7	7	1
Ramírez	.233	7	1	0	6	0	0
Meneses	.231	65	11	3	42	21	2
Lutz	.227	30	1	1	9	11	10
Ruiz	.224	54	9	6	27	11	1
Seitzel	.209	10	7	18	27	1	1
Rosario	.183	40	11	7	26	13	8
Millas	.167	5	1	1	2	2	2
Gallo	.164	23	7	5	11	21	1
Robles	.120	3	0	2	5	4	4
Núñez	.077	1	0	0	1	3	4
TOTALS	.238	731	107	77	364	271	1121

Pitchers	W	L	ERA	H	ER	BB	SO
Florez	3	2	2.01	35	10	11	36
Finno	2	4	2.17	24	9	12	39
Williams	5	0	2.22	45	14	16	47
Irvin	7	7	3.15	91	39	26	98
Law	4	2	2.59	27	15	48	48
Parker	5	3	3.44	81	35	19	74
Gore	6	7	3.83	101	40	34	112
J.Barnes	5	2	3.89	33	15	10	24
Harvey	2	4	4.40	43	21	12	46
García	0	4	5.04	17	10	43	3
Herz	1	3	5.17	35	18	9	41
Adon	0	0	5.40	6	3	3	3
Corbin	1	9	5.57	126	65	36	73
Weems	0	1	5.94	38	24	17	29
Alfonso	0	0	6.75	16	10	4	10
Rainey	0	0	6.84	27	19	16	20
Rutledge	0	0	9.00	2	1	0	1
Gray	0	2	14.04	15	13	5	9
TOTALS	42	51	4.07	806	373	255	751

NL leaders

Entering Wednesday's games.

BATTING	Ohtani, LA	Profar, SD	Arceiz, SD	Betts, LA	Harper, Phi	Freeman, LA
Ohtani, LA	.....315				
Profar, SD	.....312				
Arceiz, SD	.....309				
Betts, LA	.....304				
Harper, Phi	.....299				
Freeman, LA	.....299				

HOME RUNS	Ohtani, LA	Ozuna, Atl	Walker, Ari	Harper, Phi	Hernández, LA
Ohtani, LA	.....28			
Ozuna, Atl	.....23			
Walker, Ari	.....22			
Harper, Phi	.....20			
Hernández, LA	.....19			

ERA	López, Atl	Suárez, Phi	Wheeler, Ari	Sale, Atl	Sánchez, Phi	Stone, LA
López, Atl	.....1.71				
Suárez, Phi	.....2.58				
Wheeler, Ari	.....2.70				
Sale, Atl	.....2.74				
Sánchez, Phi	.....2.96				
Stone, LA	.....3.03				

STRIKEOUTS	Glasnow, LA	Keane, SD	Sale, Atl	Wheeler, Phi	Shane Bieber, Min
Glasnow, LA	.....143			
Keane, SD	.....138			
Sale, Atl	.....136			
Wheeler, Phi	.....126			
Shane Bieber, Min	.....124			

AL leaders	Entering Wednesday's games.
Kwan, Cle	.....363
Witt, KC	.....324
Altuve, Hou	.....309
Judge, NY	.....308
Correa, Min	.....303

HOME RUNS	Henderson, Bal <th>Santander, Bal <th>Naylor, Cle </th></th>	Santander, Bal <th>Naylor, Cle </th>	Naylor, Cle
Henderson, Bal	.....37	
Santander, Bal	.....23	
Naylor, Cle	.....22	

ERA	Lugo, KC <th>Skubal, Det <th>Blanco, Hou <th>Hiscock, Bos </th></th></th>	Skubal, Det <th>Blanco, Hou <th>Hiscock, Bos </th></th>	Blanco, Hou <th>Hiscock, Bos </th>	Hiscock, Bos
Lugo, KC2.21			
Skubal, Det2.37			
Blanco, Hou2.53			
Hiscock, Bos2.68			

STRIKEOUTS	Crochet, Chi <th>Ragans, KC <th>Skubal, Det <th>Ryan, Min </th></th></th>	Ragans, KC <th>Skubal, Det <th>Ryan, Min </th></th>	Skubal, Det <th>Ryan, Min </th>	Ryan, Min
Crochet, Chi	.....146		
Ragans, KC	.....134		
Skubal, Det	.....132		
Ryan, Min	.....118		

GAME 1

Royals 6, Cardinals 4

Salvador Perez drove in two runs with a homer and a single, leading Kansas City over St. Louis in the first game of a day-night doubleheader.

Garrett Hampson hit a two-run double and Hunter Renfroe added two hits for the Royals, who reached the 50-victory mark after winning 56 games last year.

ROYALS	AB	R	H	BIBBSOAVG
García 2b-3b.....	4	1	1	0.1.230
Witt ss.....	4	1	1	0.3.232
Paquin 1b.....	3	0	1	0.1.247
Perez cf.....	4	2	2	0.2.279
Renfroe lf.....	4	1	2	0.2.224
Fermín dh.....	4	1	1	0.1.303
Melendez lf.....	4	1	1	0.1.190
Loftin 3b.....	2	0	0	0.1.197
Massey ph-2b.....	0	0	0	0.2.274
Hampson cf.....	4	1	2	0.1.262
TOTALS	35	6	9	6 0 7

CARDINALS	AB	R	H	BIBBSOAVG
Winn ss.....	4	0	0	0.285
Burleson lf.....	4	1	2	0.283
Contreras dh.....	4	0	1	0.2.65
Goldschmidt 1b.....	4	1	1	0.3.229
Long.....	4	0	0	0.2.68
Arenado 3b.....	4	1	2	0.2.69
Nootbaar cf.....	4	0	0	0.1.228
Gorman 2b.....	3	0	0	0.2.208
Pagés c.....	2	1	1	0.1.207
TOTALS	33	4	6	4 1 11

KANSAS CITY 001 021 020 — 6 9 0
ST. LOUIS.....012 000 001 — 4 6 0

LOB: Kansas City 3, St. Louis 3. **2B:** Renfroe (14), Melendez (14), Hampson (9). **HR:** Perez (15), off Pallante; Arenado (8), off Marsh; Burleson (15), off Marsh; Goldschmidt (13), off McArthur.

ROYALS IP H R ERBB SO ERA
Marsh.....6 3 3 3 0 1 8.471
Smith.....1 0 0 0 0 0 4.71
Long.....3 0 0 0 0 1 2.55
McArthur.....1 2 1 1 0 0 2.21

CARDINALS IP H R ERBB SO ERA
Pallante.....6½ 4 4 4 0 5 4.21
Roycroft.....1½ 2 2 2 0 1 3.05
Gallegos.....1 0 0 0 0 1 7.88

WP: Marsh (7-6); LP: Pallante (4-4);
S: McArthur (16). WP: Roycroft. T: 2:27.
A: 32,108 (44,494).

GAME 1

White Sox 3, Twins 1

In the doubleheader opener, Luis Robert Jr. hit a two-run homer as Chicago finally beat Minnesota.

Erick Fedde delivered five scoreless innings and the bullpen hung on to give the White Sox their first win over the Twins in nine tries this season.

For Minnesota, Carlos Correa went 3 for 4 to extend his hitting streak to 11 games.

TWINS	AB	R	H	BIBBSOAVG
Castro 2b.....	3	0	0	0.1.270
Correa ss.....	4	0	0	0.1.310
Larnach lf.....	3	0	0	0.1.238
Miranda dh.....	4	0	1	0.1.331
Santana 1b.....	4	0	0	0.1.244
R. Lee 1b.....	4	0	0	0.1.393
Waller rf.....	4	1	2	0.2.06
Margot cf.....	3	0	0	0.2.31
Kepler ph.....	1	0	0	0.1.258
Vázquez c.....	3	0	0	0.2.199
TOTALS	33	1	6	1 2 11

WHITE SOX	AB	R	H	BIBBSOAVG
Pham lf.....	3	0	0	0.1.264
Vaughn 1b.....	3	1	1	0.1.242
Robert cf.....	3	1	2	0.1.226
Seitzel dh.....	3	1	0	0.1.229
Julks rf.....	3	1	1	0.0.236
Jiménez dh.....	3	0	1	0.0.238
Sosa 2b.....	3	0	0	0.2.245
DeJong 3b.....	2	0	1	0.1.228
Voshell c.....	2	0	0	0.1.247
K. Lee c.....	3	0	0	0.2.25
TOTALS	26	3	4	3 1 9

MINNESOTA.....000 000 100 — 1 6 0
CHICAGO.....000 012 000 — 3 0 0

LOB: Minnesota 7, Chicago 1. **2B:** Sheets (19), Vaughn (18). **HR:** Wallner (3), off Leasure; Robert (11), off Thorpe.

TWINS IP H R ERBB SO ERA
Ober.....6 4 3 3 1 6 4.14
Sands.....2 0 0 0 0 3 3.70

WHITE SOX IP H R ERBB SO ERA
Fedde.....5 4 0 0 2 5 2.99
Anderson.....1 0 0 0 0 1 4.56
Leasure.....1 1 1 0 1 0 5

Top basketball prospect Chavez is on the rise in West Texas

CHAVEZ FROM D1

last season for her public high school in Lubbock, Tex., earning state and national player of the year awards. Eventually, she will play college basketball anywhere she likes; her father, Sonny, said she has more than 100 scholarship offers.

On Instagram, where Chavez already has more than 53,000 followers, her game seems custom-fitted to a highlight reel — smooth handle, deep range and a dash of braggadocio. The comparisons are obvious and unavoidable. One video's title gets right to the point:

"Is She The Next CAITLIN CLARK?" it reads.

The stat lines bear some resemblance: In this first weekend of the AAU season, Chavez will average 18 points and shoot 50 percent (19 for 38) from three-point range as her team goes undefeated in five games. Weeks later, in Houston, she's at 29 points per game and 46 percent from three as CyFair goes 5-0 again. This weekend, the third and final showcase of the summer will be held in Louisville.

But the similarities between the rising senior and any big-name predecessor end outside of a box score. Chavez is an unlikely and singular superstar, a soft-spoken Mexican American teen from West Texas who has only ever been trained by her father and almost never watches the sport that has already made her semifamous. She is nobody's heir.

"I don't like being compared to anybody," she said. "I don't want to be the next anybody. I want to be the first Aaliyah Chavez."

Out of nowhere

The next morning in Hampton, CyFair opens its Saturday doubleheader with a game against Cal Stars, a vaunted West Coast program that produced the WNBA's Sabrina Ionescu and Cameron Brink, among others. The crowd grows as the teams warm up. In a cavernous space with four games being played simultaneously, this one draws most of the eyes.

Sonny Chavez stands at the end of the CyFair bench, observing layup lines with his arms crossed. He is not the coach, but this is where he spends every game, watching intently and occasionally providing feedback — both quiet and loud — to his daughter and her teammates.

Sonny is the main architect of Aaliyah's career, her sole trainer since she first picked up a basketball. He has helped his daughter to this point with a distinct, throwback sensibility. His approach was on display in Hampton, especially in the minutes after a victory. More than once, after her team broke its postgame huddle, Aaliyah launched into a grueling set of burpees. Sonny has employed this system with his daughter for years: 10 burpees for every missed free throw and five for every missed defensive assignment. Poor body language can add to the total.



MIKE CAUDILL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

"I don't want to be the next anybody. I want to be the first Aaliyah Chavez," the high school star said.

"It's about accountability," Sonny said. "You get in a gym like this and everybody is telling her how good she is. My job is to humble her and keep her grounded and let her know that she didn't do that good."

Asked about the extracurricular workout, Chavez shrugs.

"Free throws are free," she said. "I shouldn't be missing them."

She has come to embrace her father's ethos, separating herself with an inherent coachability and insatiable work ethic. For years, Sonny and Aaliyah have spent at least three hours every weekday training — and five hours on weekends. In time, Sonny started a private training business with Aaliyah front and center as the proof of concept.

"You have to separate the dad-and-daughter thing," Sonny said. "As a dad, you want to baby your princess; you want to tell her how great she is. But as a trainer, you

have to do the ugly stuff. A lot of dads can't do that, but I'm okay with it. I'm only okay with it because I know she's okay with it. And the moment that basketball comes in between our relationship, I'll walk away."

Their basketball success story is rare in Lubbock. Texas is known for its high school sports, but not since Sheryl Swoopes rose to prominence in the late 1980s has West Texas produced such a heralded girls' basketball prospect.

"No, West Texas is not known for hoops at all," CyFair 17U Coach Tim Bush said. "They're known for cows."

Given the lack of strong local competition, AAU basketball provided the measuring stick for Chavez's development. She and Sonny would train for months in relative obscurity, waiting for the spring and a chance to see just how much her game had pro-

gressed. Time and again, she proved to be a step ahead of most girls her age.

Jason Key, a national talent evaluator based in Texas, first saw Chavez play in the sixth grade. He remembers having a conversation with Sonny afterward, toying with a hypothetical. "Can a kid from West Texas be the best guard in Texas?" Key wondered aloud. "That would be something."

Chavez's profile rose when she joined CyFair. The program, which pulls its athletes from across Texas and the southwest, has a long history of success. In the 17 years since ESPN started ranking girls' prospects, Chavez is the third No. 1 prospect to play for CyFair, joining Chiney Ogwumike (2010) and Christyn Williams (2018).

But CyFair director Earl Allen still views Chavez as a rarity. "To be honest with you, we

don't get very many Spanish kids that come out to play basketball for us," Allen said. "Especially one that is that damn good."

In the summer after her freshman year, playing up on the 17U team, Chavez helped CyFair win Nike Nationals, the circuit's championship event. She scored 18 points in the title game, finishing 7 for 10 from the field.

At that point, it was clear that Chavez was the top 2025 player in Texas. So it was time to move on to a new metric: Was she the best prospect in the country?

On the cusp

It doesn't take long for Chavez to get going against Cal Stars. She hits her first three-pointer two minutes into the game and starts heating up from there. She hits two more on back-to-back possessions, and a buzz starts to build in the crowd. By the end of the first quarter, she's 5 for 5 from deep and her team leads.

Different people have different theories as to what makes the guard so good. Key said it's her hand-eye coordination. In just about every game she plays, it's clear that Chavez has a dizzying command of the ball. When asked which player his star reminds him of most, Allen picks Kyrie Irving.

"You can tell that hours and hours have been spent in the gym and with the basketball," Key said. "Even informally, dribbling through a park or down the street, you can see it. She's one of those kids that is one with the ball."

Sonny said it's her shooting stroke — and that's the key to everything. All those hours spent alone practicing her shot made other aspects of the game much easier: A double team can give her an easy assist; a pump fake can send her past any defender.

By halftime, Chavez has 26 points. In her third year playing on this, the biggest of AAU stages, she looks comfortable and loose. She orchestrates the CyFair offense, setting up teammates and scoring with remarkable efficiency. While many players here are focused on their individual performances in hopes of impressing one of the dozens of college coaches that populate the baseline, Chavez knows she has nothing left to prove. There are no more scholarship offers left to earn.

She got her first offer, from hometown Texas Tech, when she was in eighth grade. At first, Chavez would post to social media every time a new one was proffered. Eventually she stopped — it was too hard to keep up.

In October, hoping to streamline the process, she cut her list to 10 schools: Arizona, LSU, Ohio State, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Texas Tech, UCLA and USC.

"You're talking about a face-of-the-franchise-type player," Key said of her potential at the next level. "Paige [Bueckers]. Caitlin. JuJu Watkins. She is that type of kid. She is on that level in terms

of what she can bring to a school."

In the modern college landscape, that kind of star potential gets money involved. To this point, Chavez has been sidelined from the complexities of name, image and likeness issues because Texas prohibits high school athletes from making deals. But that will change in college.

First and foremost, Chavez wants to find the right fit for her game: This past winter, she started watching women's college basketball for the first time so she could study coaches and systems. But as they search for a college home, Chavez and her family know the importance of her decision goes beyond basketball.

"Before NIL, I was working so hard just to get my kid free school," Sonny said. "It was about: 'Go get free school and change our generational curse of not getting to the next level. I didn't finish college; my wife didn't finish college. So change it. Go be the first one, and use basketball as the tool to do it.' Now, with NIL it's like, 'Go change your life.'"

Outside of her abilities, Chavez carries the potential to grow the game as a trailblazing star in the Mexican American community. As she has grown older and basketball has taken her away from Texas more often, she has come to recognize the significance of her heritage. On social media, her inbox is often full of messages from younger Hispanic players, asking for advice or telling her they're following along.

"You don't see a lot of people that look like me out here," Chavez said. "I'm just trying to do it for the Mexican community and for any kids who may not think they can do this."

By the second half of Saturday's game, word has spread around the Boo Williams Sportsplex that Chavez is putting on a show. As other games finish, players and coaches from other teams join the throng gathered to see the country's top rising senior. CyFair pulls away in the third quarter, earning a 94-81 win. Chavez finishes with 37 points, five assists and five rebounds, making 9 of 13 shots from behind the arc.

Afterward, there are no burpees — just a happy postgame huddle with a large crowd hovering nearby. Among them is a small group of middle school girls, much like the one from Friday afternoon and the ones who will seek out Chavez for the foreseeable future. They linger quietly. Sonny sees them.

"Who do you guys want a picture with?" he asks them, already knowing the answer.

The girls point to Chavez. When Sonny tells them he is her dad, they gasp. This sparks an idea.

"Can you ask her?" one girl says.

Sonny calls for his daughter and she comes over, sweat still dripping and a smile on her face.

"Hey," Sonny says to her. "These girls want a picture with Aaliyah Chavez."

Corbin falters and Law falls apart as sixth inning dooms Nationals in New York

NATIONALS FROM D1

the latest example, and it helped stretch the Nationals' losing streak to four.

"I was just trying to get a groundball and obviously hold the runs," Law said. "It didn't work out how it was supposed to. It's kind of been that way, at least recently."

The situation Law entered was not exactly enviable. Patrick Corbin had allowed three straight hits to open the inning, surrendering a one-run lead and leaving runners at second and third in a 2-2 game. Law walked the first batter he faced, Francisco Alvarez, on four pitches. He then allowed a two-run single to Jose Iglesias to make it 4-2. A throwing error by Luis Garcia Jr. on what could have been an inning-ending double play made it 5-2 before Law finally got out of the inning.

"It's frustrating," Law said. "Pat pitched great. You come in and you're expected to your job. Pat did his job and you come in and you don't — it ends up being his runs. I think it's more frustrating doing that than coming in and giving them up for yourself. For it to end like that, it's kind of a bummer and it takes a blow to the team as well."

Law, who was signed to a minor league contract this



JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

James Wood, who slid into the second spot in the lineup, was caught stealing after being hit by a pitch.

spring, allowed just two of his 26 inherited runners to score a season ago, when he was pitching for the Cincinnati Reds. He has allowed 20 of 29 to come around this season.

"You can't give up on him," Martinez said. "When he's on, he's really good. ... We just got to get him squared away and get him

back in the zone."

Corbin did his part, holding the Mets (46-45) at bay into the sixth as the Nationals (42-51) missed a chance to square this three-game series. Brandon Nimmo tagged him for a first-inning homer, but Corbin was strong after that, striking out five before running into trouble in the sixth.

The 34-year-old lefty also deftly worked his way out of trouble, most notably in the fourth when he escaped a bases-loaded jam by striking out Tyrone Taylor with three straight sliders.

To that point, Washington gave Corbin just enough support to put him in line for the win. The Nationals made a slight shift in

their lineup against righty Luis Severino — the only New York pitcher they didn't face in the teams' four-game series last week at Nationals Park.

Martinez slid Lane Thomas down into the sixth slot in the order, putting three lefties, including James Wood in the second spot, and switch hitter Keibert Ruiz ahead of him. Thomas, who came in hitting more than 100 points better against lefties (.329 to .207), had batted lower than fourth just once this season.

Stacking the lineup paid dividends in the fourth, when Ruiz, Thomas and Juan Yezze singled to give Washington a 2-1 lead. The second run came in with the help of a throwing error by Taylor in right field.

That lead lasted until the sixth, when Corbin found trouble and Martinez turned to Law. Corbin said he felt his slider was working well and, in hindsight, he could have gone to it more in the sixth. Instead, he left his pitches up in the strike zone.

"I thought they had some good at-bats there," Corbin said. "Made some pitches; they had some good swings there. We got into a little bit of trouble. Maybe try to look back and see what we could've done a little bit different."

"We're pressing, obviously —

NATIONALS ON DECK

at New York Mets

Thursday 1:10 MASN

at Milwaukee Brewers

Friday 8:10 MASN2

Saturday 4:10 MASN2

Sunday 2:10 MASN

vs. Cincinnati Reds

July 19 6:45 MASN

July 20 6:45 MASN

July 21 1:35 MASN

Radio: WJFK (106.7 FM),
WDCN (87.7 FM)

offensively, defensively," Law said. "It's our job to come in as the bullpen and close the door, and I just didn't do that today."

The Nationals had four hits in the fourth inning, but they finished with just five. Garcia doubled off lefty Danny Young with two outs in the eighth inning. With Thomas coming to the plate with a chance to cut into the deficit, Mets Manager Carlos Mendoza went to right-hander José Buttó. Thomas struck out swinging to end the inning.

He beat leukemia.
But then things got really bad...

Read "Medical Mysteries," Tuesdays in **Health & Science**.

wapo.st/medicalmysteries **The Washington Post**



ARIC BECKER/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

Gregg Berhalter's team was the first host in Copa América history to get eliminated during group play.

After Copa woes, Berhalter's run ends

BERHALTER FROM D1

incident that occurred when he was a college student and a rift with a player's parents.

"The Copa América result is extremely disappointing and I take full responsibility for our performance," Berhalter said in a statement. "Our approach and process was always focused on the 2026 World Cup and I remain confident this group will be one of the great stories in 2026."

Crocker, a Welshman who joined the USSF in April 2023, said he hopes to fill the position before friendlies against Canada on Sept. 7 in Kansas City, Kan., and New Zealand on Sept. 10 in Cincinnati.

"We are looking for a serial winning coach, a coach that can also build on the work that has already been put in place," Crocker said. "Clearly, there's still a lot of potential within the group, and we have to turn that into performance and results."

Domestic-based candidates to replace Berhalter could include Los Angeles FC's Steve Cherundolo, a former standout U.S. defender, and the Columbus Crew's Wilfried Nancy, a Frenchman who won the MLS Cup last year in his first season with the team and earned praise for his tactics and management style.

If the USSF thinks really big, it could try to persuade Jürgen Klopp to return to coaching after a celebrated nine-year tenure guiding Liverpool. A return to the sideline, however, would probably be in European club soccer, where he would command a massive contract. At Liverpool, Klopp earned more than \$50 million annually in salary and other guarantees. In the USSF's most recent tax filing (2022), Berhalter made about \$2.3 million, including \$900,000 in bonuses after the World Cup.

The decision by Crocker to rehire Berhalter last year came after Berhalter's contract expired following the 2022 World Cup. It

also came amid a messy situation involving midfielder Gio Reyna's parents and an investigation into Berhalter kicking his now-wife during an argument when they were attending the University of North Carolina.

With arguably the most talented roster in program history, the U.S. team this year continued to fare well in regional competition but stumbled under this summer's bright lights. Expected to advance to Copa América's knockout stage, the Americans were eliminated in group play after losing their final two matches, to Panama and Uruguay.

"There's been progress in the group," Crocker said. "But that progress hasn't translated into enough wins in that tournament, which is pretty critical."

Copa América was the biggest test for the U.S. team leading up to the 2026 World Cup, which will be staged in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

The USSF sees the World Cup as an opportunity for the national team to make breakthrough gains on the field and grow the sport's popularity. The catchphrase used by Berhalter and his players the past year has been "Change soccer in America forever."

The Copa América results were a bitter disappointment to the USSF, which, shortly after the team's elimination, said it would "conduct a comprehensive review." The statement did not cite Berhalter but clearly was directed at a coach who had not gotten the most out of his players.

The U.S. failure came as Canada, under Jesse Marsch, a Wisconsin native, was making a run to the Copa América semifinals. Marsch was a finalist for the U.S. job last year.

Many U.S. players effusively backed Berhalter's return last year, a sentiment that seemed to weigh heavily in Crocker's decision at the time. A former U.S. World Cup defender who coached in Sweden and MLS,

Berhalter established a fresh culture upon his appointment in 2018 and built a promising roster following the program's failure to qualify for the World Cup that year.

He introduced many young players into the program, created a strong bond among the players and staff, and implemented a proactive playing style. Through growing pains, the team qualified for the 2022 World Cup and fielded the youngest starting lineup in Qatar.

As the roster matured — and players joined prominent European clubs — expectations soared. The results, though, did not follow this year. The U.S. team did win the Concacaf Nations League for the third consecutive year, extending its dominance over rival Mexico, but in a Copa América tuneup last month, a 5-1 defeat to Colombia was its worst setback in eight years.

In group play, the Americans defeated Bolivia, the worst team in the tournament, but were shorthanded most of the game against Panama after winger Tim Weah received a red card. Still, the Americans took the lead and were tied late before conceding the winning goal. Needing to beat Uruguay and receive help in the other group game, the United States lost, 1-0.

Not since the 108-year-old tournament went to a single host country in 1987 had the home team failed to advance. Beyond that indignity, the U.S. squad was not making progress under Berhalter.

"I want to thank the U.S. Soccer Federation for entrusting me to lead this team for the past five years," Berhalter said. "Representing our country is a tremendous honor and I am proud of the identity we have built on and off the field. It was very gratifying watching this team improve over the years and I remain grateful for the lifetime bonds created with our players, coaches and staff members."

Mystics withstand Clark, deny Fever's comeback

MYSTICS FROM D1

the ball to secure possession with 16.9 seconds left, and Julie Vanloo hit a pair of free throws to ice the win.

The Mystics (6-17) ended a two-game skid and have just two matchups left before next week's All-Star Game and the ensuing Olympic break. They host Las Vegas on Sunday and Phoenix on Tuesday. The Mystics are 6-5 since losing a franchise-record 12 straight games to open the season.

"I think we're figuring each other out," Atkins said. "But also I think a big thing [is] ... we're actually listening, too. We can talk, but we're also listening."

Atkins had her fifth 20-point game of the season and fell three points shy of her season high. She also recorded three rebounds, three assists, three steals and a block.

"Just her aggressiveness," Mystics center Stefanie Dolson said. "In general, she's been doing a really good job of staying consistent. And even when she's not scoring, she's still doing that little stuff. But today especially, she did a really good job of finishing the plays, being the

first one to a loose ball. In the end, she saved it for us. ... And then defensively, she was incredible."

Washington had turned in one of its most complete performances of the season through three quarters. The roster remains shorthanded with Brittney Sykes (foot), Shakira Austin (hip) and Karlise Samuelson (hand) still out. A flurry of turnovers led to an early hole for the Fever (9-14), which trailed 26-17 after the first quarter and 51-37 at halftime. For the game, Indiana's 23 turnovers were the second most by a Mystics opponent this season, and Washington's 23 points off turnovers fell three shy of a season high.

The Mystics' offense operated at an efficient clip early with 11 assists on 12 first-quarter baskets and generated back-cut layups all afternoon.

Dolson finished with 13 points, six assists and five rebounds, while Vanloo — who irritated fellow rookie Clark to the point that Vanloo was the recipient of a two-handed shove — added another 13 points. Aaliyah Edwards put up 12 points and six rebounds off the bench, and Shatori Walker-Kimbrough

continued her strong play as a reserve with 10 points and threw a pretty alley-oop to Dolson over Clark for a three-point play.

"When we play our offense with a really good pace and speed, it can catch guards, especially, off balance," Dolson said. "... So anytime they're cutting, I'm looking."

Clark got loose for 29 points (including five threes), 13 assists, five rebounds, five steals and three blocked shots. She became the first player in WNBA history with 25-plus points, 10-plus assists, five-plus rebounds, five-plus steals and five-plus three-pointers. She dragged the Fever back within a possession in the final minute as the Mystics started to have their own ball security issues, but Indiana couldn't complete the rally.

The Mystics kept the rest of the Fever relatively in check. Kelsey Mitchell had 15 points and Nalysa Smith chipped in 11 off the bench. Dolson and Edwards didn't let Boston, the No. 1 pick in the 2023 draft, get going. She managed just six points to go with five turnovers and five fouls.

"We played with good force, and we made them feel us," Thibault said. "Thought we were disciplined in our coverages against not just Caitlin but everybody down the line."

"Everybody was just locked in and involved in kind of knowing what they do well."

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	18	4	.818	—
Connecticut	17	5	.773	1
Chicago	9	12	.429	8½
Indiana	9	14	.391	9½
Los Angeles	7	14	.333	10½
Washington	6	17	.261	12½

WEST	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	16	6	.727	—
Las Vegas	14	7	.667	1½
Seattle	11	8	.576	4
Phoenix	12	10	.545	4
Los Angeles	5	17	.227	11
Dallas	5	18	.217	11½

TUESDAY'S RESULT

Minnesota 82, at Los Angeles 67

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS
Washington 89, at Indiana 84
New York 71, at Connecticut 68
at Chicago 78, Atlanta 69
Las Vegas 84, at Seattle 77
at Phoenix 100, Dallas 84

THURSDAY'S GAME
Chicago at New York, 7

FRIDAY'S GAMES
Las Vegas at Atlanta, 7:30
Phoenix at Indiana, 7:30
Minnesota at Seattle, 10

SATURDAY'S GAMES
New York at Chicago, 1
Los Angeles at Dallas, 3:30

SUNDAY'S GAMES
Las Vegas at Washington, 3
Phoenix at Connecticut, 1
Indiana at Minnesota, 4
Atlanta at Seattle, 6

MONDAY'S GAMES
No games scheduled.

Mystics 89, Fever 84

Washington	26	25	13	—	89
Indiana	17	20	18	29	84

WASHINGTON	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Hines-Allen	20:44	1-9	0-0	5-9	3	2	2
Richards	9:06	3-4	0-0	1-2	0	0	9
Dolson	29:00	5-8	1-1	0-5	6	3	13
Atkins	32:26	10-17	5-6	1-3	3	4	26
Vanloo	28:21	4-10	2-2	0-2	4	13	13
Walker-Kimbrough	18:17	4-11	2-3	0-0	3	10	10
Edwards	21:09	4-8	5-5	4-4	1	12	12
Melbourne	20:33	3-7	2-2	0-3	2	3	9
Engstler	8:24	2-5	0-0	1-1	0	1	4
TOTALS	200	33-75	16-19	31-23	18	89	

Percentages: FG .440, FT .824. **3-Point Goals:** 7-20, 35/0 (Vanloo 3-7, Dolson 2-3, Melbourne 1-2, Atkins 1-3, Engstler 0-1, Hines-Allen 0-1, Walker-Kimbrough 0-3). **Team Rebounds:** 9. **Team Turnovers:** None. **Blocked Shots:** 3 (Atkins, Melbourne, Richards). **Turnovers:** 16 (Atkins 3, Hines-Allen 3, Walker-Kimbrough 3, Melbourne 2, Vanloo 2, Dolson, Edwards, Engstler). **Steals:** 8 (Atkins 3, Walker-Kimbrough 2, Dolson, Engstler, Melbourne). **Technical Fouls:** None.

INDIANA	MIN	FG	FT	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Hull	19:51	2-2	0-0	2-2	0	5	5
Kat-Samuelsen	32:45	3-6	0-0	0-9	0	5	8
Stokes	20:58	3-4	0-0	1-6	0	6	6
Clark	37:47	17-14	11-11	1-13	5	29	29
Mitchell	37:47	6-14	3-5	0-2	1	15	15
Smith	20:57	5-10	1-1	0-2	1	3	11
Wheeler	11:23	3-4	0-0	1-1	0	1	6
Dantas	8:22	1-7	0-0	0-1	1	2	2
Wallace	3:52	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	2
TOTALS	200	31-58	14-17	2-9	18	84	

Percentages: FG .534, FT .824. **3-Point Goals:** 8-25, 32/0 (Hull 5-9, Kat-Samuelsen 2-4, Smith 1-3, Dantas 0-1, Mitchell 0-1, Wheeler 0-1, Mitchell 0-1). **Team Rebounds:** 16 (Clark 5, Hines-Allen 3, Walker-Kimbrough 3, Melbourne 2, Vanloo 2, Dolson, Edwards, Engstler). **Steals:** 8 (Atkins 3, Walker-Kimbrough 2, Dolson, Engstler, Melbourne). **Technical Fouls:** None. **A:** 17,274 (20,000). **T:** 2,04.

Liberty 71, Sun 68

New York	29	10	20	12	—	71
Connecticut	19	19	16	14	—	68

NEW YORK: Fiebach 2-6 0-0 5, Stewart 5-9 8-10 18, J.Jones 4-8 0-0 8, Ionescu 8-15 4-4 21, Vandersloot 5-11 0-0 11, Thornton 2-3 0-0 4, Burke 2-5 0-0 4. **TOTALS:** 28-57

CONNECTICUT: Bonner 4-16 7-7 22, Thomas 1-4 1-2 3, B.Jones 8-15 1-2 17, Carrington 3-9 1-18, Harris 4-14 2-2 11, Batum 1-3 0-0 3, Burton 0-3 0-0 0, Mitchell 1-3 2-2 4. **TOTALS:** 24-67 14-16 68

Three-point Goals: New York 3-11 (Fiebach 1-1, Ionescu 1-3, Vandersloot 1-4, Burke 0-1, Stewart 1-1, Jones 0-3), Connecticut 6-17 (Bonner 3-5, Carrington 1-1, Thomas 2-2, Harris 1-6, Burton 0-3). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** New York 33 (Stewart 11, Connecticut 25 (Bonner, Thomas 9). **Assists:** Atlanta 22 (Fiebach, Ionescu 5), Connecticut 16. **A:** 8,910 (9,323)

Aces 84, Storm 79

Las Vegas	13	17	30	24	—	84
Seattle	17	19	24	24	—	79

LAS VEGAS: Williams 7-18 10-10 24, Young 10-19 6-7 27, Stokich 0-0 0-0, Gray 8-0 0-0 16, Pili 3-1 1-1, Clark 2-9 0-0 5, Hayes 1-2 2-2 4, Martin 0-1 0-0. **TOTALS:** 30-70 19-20 84

SEATTLE: Horston 1-6 0-0 2, Ogunwumike 4-15 0-1 9, Magbegor 5-7 0-0 10, Diggins-Smith 7-13 2-2 16, Loyd 8-22 10-11 28, Holmes 4-6 0-0 8, Vivians 1-6 0-0 2, Whitcomb 1-2 2-2 4. **TOTALS:** 31-77 14-16 79

Three-point Goals: Las Vegas 5-23 (Plum 2-6, Gray 1-2, Clark 1-6, Young 1-6, Hayes 0-1, Wilson 0-2), Seattle 2-17 (Loyd 2-4, Ogunwumike 1-3, Horston 0-1, Magbegor 0-1, Whitcomb 0-1, Diggins-Smith 0-2, Holmes 0-2, Vivians 0-3). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Las Vegas 38 (Wilson 20), Seattle 40 (Magbegor 10). **Assists:** Las Vegas 21 (Gray 6), Seattle 19 (Diggins-Smith 8). **Total Fouls:** Las Vegas 14, Seattle 14. **A:** 12,500 (15,354)

Mercury 100, Wings 84

Dallas	29	17	20	18	—	84
Phoenix	21	28	14	20	—	100

DALLAS: Howard 7-10 5-8 19, Sheldon 1-4 2-2 4, McCowan 7-10 1-2 15, Ogunbowale 4-14 3-13, Sims 6-11 2-19, Billings 4-6 0-0 8, K.Brown 3-4 0-0 6, Soares 0-1 0-0 0, Lopez Sénéchal 0-1 0-0 0, Uzun 0-3 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 32-64 13-18 84

PHOENIX: Allen 3-6 1-1 8, Herbert Harrison 5-8 0-0 12, Griner 2-15 3-23, Cloud 4-7 4-14, Coppers 12-19 9-32, Dixon 0-0 0-0 0, Mack 2-3 0-0 4, Cunningham 1-3 4-7, Sutton 0-0 0-0 0. **TOTALS:** 36-61 19-22 100

Three-point Goals: Dallas 7-19 (Sims 5-6, Ogunbowale 2-8, Lopez Sénéchal 0-1, Soares 0-1, Uzun 0-1, Sheldon 0-2), Phoenix 9-21 (Griner 2-2, Cloud 2-5, Herbert Harrison 2-5, Cunningham 1-2, Allen 1-3, Coper 1-4). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Dallas 26 (McCowan 10), Phoenix 22 (Copper 5). **Assists:** Dallas 25 (Ogunbowale 13), Phoenix 24 (Cloud 6). **Total Fouls:** Dallas 18, Phoenix 19. **A:** 11,601 (18,422)

Lynx 82, Sparks 67

Minnesota	29	22	19	12	—	82
Los Angeles	16	19	16	16	—	67

MINNESOTA: Carleton 6-7 0-0 16, Juhász 7-11 4-1 15, Smith 2-17 (Loyd 2-4, Ogunwumike 1-3, Horston 0-1, Magbegor 0-1-11, Hiedeman 2-5 0-0 5). **TOTALS:** 32-65 9-10 82

LOS ANGELES: Jackson 3-8 0-1 6, Stevens 4-9 0-0 9, Hamby 7-9 3-18, McDonald 2-0 4, Nurse 2-7 1-1 5, Burrell 0-4 6-6, Yueri 0-2 4-4 4, Clarendon 4-5 0-0 8, Cooke 1-4 2-2 5, Dangerfield 0-2 2-2 2. **TOTALS:** 23-56 18-19 67

Three-point Goals: Minnesota 9-18 (Carleton 4-4, Zandbergen 2-3, Hiedeman 1-2, Pili 1-3, McBride 1-4, Smith 0-1, Williams 0-1), Los Angeles 3-20 (Hamby 1-2, Cooke 1-3, Stevens 1-3, Burrell 0-1, Clarendon 0-1, Dangerfield 0-2, Jackson 0-2, McDonald 0-2, Nurse 0-4). **Fouled Out:** None. **Rebounds:** Minnesota 27 (Juhász, Smith 6), Los Angeles 29 (Hamby 8). **Assists:** Minnesota 23 (Williams 5), Los Angeles 17 (Clarendon, McDonald, Stevens 4). **Total Fouls:** Minnesota 22, Los Angeles 20. **A:** 9,533 (18,997)

SCOREBOARD

SOCCER

MLS	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Cincinnati	15	4	3	48	42	26
Inter Miami CF	14	4	5	47	51	37
Columbus	11	3	6	39	40	18
New York City FC	9	4	9	36	36	27
Charlotte FC	9	5	2	35	33	27
Orlando City	9	5	3	32	24	23
Nashville	9	6	2	32	32	36
Toronto FC	7	8	2	26	30	43
Atlanta	6	10	6	24	31	32
CF Montreal	5	9	2	23	31	46
New England	7	12	1	22	20	38
Chicago	5	11	6	21	28	40
Philadelphia	9	9	2	26	39	39
D.C. United	4	11	8	20	30	47

WEST	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Los Angeles FC	13	4	4	43	43	24
Real Salt Lake	12	3	7	43	48	27
LA Galaxy	12	7	4	43	44	30
Portland	11	8	4	37	44	37
Vancouver	9	8	6	33	45	39
Seattle	9	7	5	32	34	29
Houston	8	7	7	31	31	26
Austin FC	8	6	3	30	29	21
Minnesota United	8	9	5	29	35	37
FC Dallas	6	11	5	23	32	37
St. Louis City SC	4					

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Legal Notices

There is now pending before the District of Columbia Superior Court a civil action, case number 2023-CAB-0001113 seeking to affect title to the property...

All medical records retained by Laura Primakoff, Ph.D. will be destroyed after September 3, 2024...

Cello Partnership and its controlled affiliates doing business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes to collocate wireless communications antennas...

Cello Partnership and its controlled affiliates doing business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes to collocate wireless communications antennas...

Legal Notice Notification is hereby given that JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association, is the creditor...

NOTICE OF CONDEMNATION OF THE PROPERTY INTEREST THAT UNION STATION INVESTCO OBTAINED FROM UNION STATION VENTURE II, LLC BY ASSUMPTION OF LEASEHOLD INTEREST MADE AS OF JANUARY 25, 2007...

Demetra Filiz, whose address is 3227 Martin Luther King Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20032 was appointed personal representative of the estate of Amir Renard Fultz...

Demetra Filiz, whose address is 3227 Martin Luther King Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20032 was appointed personal representative of the estate of Amir Renard Fultz...

BASIS Washington, DC is advertising the opportunity to submit proposals for qualified vendors to provide toilet partition and privacy screen replacement services...

Demetra Filiz, whose address is 3227 Martin Luther King Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20032 was appointed personal representative of the estate of Amir Renard Fultz...

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All medical records retained by Dana O'Brien, Ph.D. will be destroyed after September 5, 2024...

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820 Official Notices

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AIR AND RADIATION ADMINISTRATION NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING

In accordance with HB 1200/Ch. 588 of 2022, the applicant provided environmental justice (EJ) score for the project is located using the Maryland EJ Screening Tool...

Pursuant to the Environment Article, Section 1-603, Annotated Code of Maryland, an Informational Meeting has been scheduled so that citizens can discuss the application and the permit review process...

The Department will provide an interpreter for deaf and hearing-impaired persons provided that a request is made for such service at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting...

815 Legal Notices

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PROBATE DIVISION WASHINGTON, DC 20001-2131 2024 ADM 000123

Charles G. Peters, Jr. aka Charles Given Peters Christine W. Hubbard, Esq. 1049 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Davidsonville, MD 21035

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT, NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND NOTICE TO UNKNOWN HEIRS

Elizabeth H. Peters, whose address is 5025 V Street, NW, Washington, DC 20015 was appointed personal representative of the estate of Charles G. Peters, Jr. aka Charles Given Peters...

Elizabeth H. Peters PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ESTATE OF CHARLES G. PETERS, JR. REGISTER OF WILLS

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PROBATE DIVISION WASHINGTON, DC 20001-2131 2024 ADM 000123

Amir Renard Fultz 1919 M Street, NW, Suite 600 Washington, DC 20036

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The Department will provide an interpreter for deaf and hearing-impaired persons provided that a request is made for such service at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting...

815 Legal Notices

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PROBATE DIVISION WASHINGTON, DC 20001-2131 2024 ADM 000123

Charles G. Peters, Jr. aka Charles Given Peters Christine W. Hubbard, Esq. 1049 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Davidsonville, MD 21035

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT, NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND NOTICE TO UNKNOWN HEIRS

Elizabeth H. Peters, whose address is 5025 V Street, NW, Washington, DC 20015 was appointed personal representative of the estate of Charles G. Peters, Jr. aka Charles Given Peters...

Elizabeth H. Peters PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ESTATE OF CHARLES G. PETERS, JR. REGISTER OF WILLS

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PROBATE DIVISION WASHINGTON, DC 20001-2131 2024 ADM 000123

Amir Renard Fultz 1919 M Street, NW, Suite 600 Washington, DC 20036

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840 Trustees Sale - DC

MCNAMEE HOSEA, P.A. 6404 Ivy Lane, Suite 820 Greenbelt, Maryland 20770 301.441.2420

COURT APPOINTED TRUSTEES' FORECLOSURE SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

2107 FORT DAVIS STREET, SE UNIT 201 WASHINGTON, DC 20020 (Square 5673, Lot 2110)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024 AT 12:00 PM

THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED PROPERTY AND IMPROVEMENTS THEREON situated in Washington, DC and more fully designated as Lot 2110 in Square 5673 in a Deed of Trust, Assignment of Rents and Security Agreement dated December 11, 2018 and recorded as Instrument No. 2018124305 among the D.C. Land Records, and described as follows:

All that piece or parcel of land, together with the improvements, rights, privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in the District of Columbia, described as follows, to wit:

Part of Lot 15 in Square 5673 in a subdivision made by Fairfax Village Extension, Incorporated, as per plat recorded in Liber 113 at Folio 41 among the Records of the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia.

NOTE: At the date hereof, and above-described land is designated on the records of the Assessor of the District of Columbia for assessment and taxation purposes as Lot 2110 in Square 5673.

Together with all the appurtenances incident to said unit, as contained in said Declaration of Condominium (as amended).

Subject, However, to all the provisions, restrictions, easements and conditions as contained in said Declaration of Condominium (as amended), and the By-laws relating thereto (as amended).

The Condominium Declaration allocates to the Condominium Unit an undivided interest (stated as a percentage) in the common elements of the Condominium (hereinafter called the "Percentage Interest"). The Percentage Interest of the Condominium Unit is set forth in the Condominium Declaration.

FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY The improvements thereon being known as 2107 Fort Davis Street, SE, Unit 201 Washington, DC 20020

THE PROPERTY WILL BE SOLD BY SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' DEED "AS IS" WITHOUT ANY COVENANT, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, IN FEE SIMPLE, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS, EASEMENTS, AND ALL OTHER RECORDED INSTRUMENTS SUPERIOR TO THE DEED OF TRUST REFERENCED ABOVE, AND SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION BY THE COURT.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of at least \$25,000 will be required at time of sale, in cashier's or certified check, or other form as Substitute Trustees may determine. The deposit required to bid at the auction is waived for the Noteholder and any of its successors or assigns.

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857 Howard County

Rosenberg & Associates, LLC 4340 East West Highway, Suite 600 Bethesda, MD 20814 (301) 907-8000 www.rosenberg-assoc.com

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY

9551 WOODBLOCK ROW COLUMBIA, MD 21045

JULY 12, 2024 AT 9:20 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND, together with the buildings and improvements thereon situated in Howard County, MD and more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust, Tax ID #16-102563. The property, which is improved by a dwelling, will be sold in an "as is" condition and subject to conditions, restrictions and agreements of record affecting the same, if any, and with no warranty of any kind.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$34,000 in the form of certified check, cashier's check or money order will be required of the purchaser at time and place of sale. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten days of final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for Howard County. Interest to be paid on the unpaid purchase money at the rate pursuant to the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date funds are received in the office of the Trustees. There will be no abatement of interest in the event additional funds are tendered before settlement or if settlement is delayed for any reason. The noteholder shall not be obligated to pay interest if it is the purchaser. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE FOR THE PURCHASER. There will be no reduction of interest due to overpayment of deposit. Adjustment of all real property taxes (excluding recapture of previously reduced or exempt taxes) and any other public charges or assessments, to the extent such amount survive foreclosure sale, including water/sewer charges, and ground rent to be adjusted to date of sale and paid at execution of the deed, except where the secured party is the purchaser, and thereafter assumed by the purchaser. All due and/or unpaid private utility, water and sewer facilities charges, condo/HOA assessments and Columbia Assco. assessments, to the extent such amount survive foreclosure sale, are payable by the purchaser without adjustment. Cost of all documentary stamps, transfer taxes, recaptured taxes (including but not limited to agricultural taxes), and settlement expenses shall be borne by the purchaser. Purchaser shall be responsible for obtaining physical possession of the property. Purchaser assumes the risk of loss or damage to the property from the date of sale forward. Additional terms to be announced at the time of sale.

If the Trustees are unable to convey good and marketable title, the purchaser's sole remedy in law and equity shall be limited to a refund of the deposit without interest. If the purchaser fails to go to settlement, the deposit shall be forfeited. The Trustees for application against all expenses, attorney's fees and the full commission on the sale price of the above-scheduled foreclosure sale. In the event of default, all expenses of this sale (including attorney's fees and the full commission on the gross sale price of this sale) shall be charged against and paid out of the forfeited deposit. The Trustees may then re-advertise and resell the property at the risk and expense of the defaulting purchaser or may avail themselves of any legal or equitable remedies against the defaulting purchaser without reselling the property. In the event of a resale, the defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to receive the surplus, if any, even if such surplus results from improvements to the property by said defaulting purchaser and the defaulting purchaser shall be liable to the Trustees and secured party for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred in connection with all litigation involving the Property or the proceeds of the resale. Defaulting purchaser waives personal service of any document filed in connection with such a motion on him/herself and/or any principal or corporate designee, and expressly agrees to accept service of any such document by regular mail directed to the address provided by said purchaser at the time of the foreclosure auction. Trustees' file number 22-001274-MD-F-1.

Diane S. Rosenberg, Mark D. Meyer, et al., Trustees

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Jun 27, Jul 4, 11 2024 0012464465

'Forza!': Italian Musetti knocks off Fritz to advance to Wimbledon semifinals

BY AVA WALLACE

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND — There is a sound commonly heard this year at Wimbledon, en vogue amid the hushed murmurs and encouraging shouts of "Come on!" and polite applause and sometimes even rowdy applause. It returned again at the start of the fortnight, made it all the way to Day 10 and will stick around for two more days, at least. The sound is far from unfamiliar at the All England Club, but it hasn't been heard this often, for this long, in some time.

That would be the sound of an Italian rallying cry: "Forza!"

Court No. 1 has grown accustomed to its fair share of "Forza!" being hurled from the stands this tournament, as it was Wednesday when No. 25 seed Lorenzo Musetti surprised No. 13 seed Taylor Fritz with a 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 triumph in the quarterfinals that makes him just the fourth Italian man to reach the semifinals at Wimbledon, after Nicola Pietrangeli in 1960, Matteo Berrettini in 2021 and current No. 1 Jannik Sinner last year.

He follows those men and, more recently, his countrywoman Jasmine Paolini, the seventh seed here who on Tuesday defeated American Emma Navarro in straight sets to become the first Italian woman to make a Wimbledon semifinal.

Together, Musetti and Paolini made it so this Wimbledon is just the second time in which an Italian man and woman have reached the semifinals of a Grand Slam — the first time being when Paolini and Sinner did so at the French Open last month.

Paolini advanced to face Donna Vekic, who will play her first Grand Slam semifinal Thursday in her 43rd major appearance. Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan will face Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic in the other women's semifinal Thursday following quarterfinal wins Wednesday.

Musetti's prize after his triumph — which played out in front of Queen Camilla, who walked over from the Royal Box on Centre Court and joined in the wave at one point during the match — is a meeting with tennis royalty. Novak Djokovic earned a walk-



HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

Lorenzo Musetti ousted American Taylor Fritz in five sets to become just the fourth Italian man ever to make the Wimbledon semifinals.

over in the other men's quarterfinal Wednesday when Alex de Minaur of Australia withdrew with a hip injury.

The gulf of experience between the two men is wide: Musetti, 22, will contest the first Grand Slam semifinal of his career. Djokovic, 37, will match Roger Federer's record number of appearances in the men's singles semifinals at Wimbledon with his 13th.

"He probably knows better than me the surface and the stadium, for sure," Musetti said, delivering the understatement with a smile.

Musetti has had plenty of time to study the grass over the past 10 days, though that may not be a positive. The Italian's win over Fritz was his second five-set

match of the tournament, and he enters Friday's duel having spent 15 hours 53 minutes on court, while Djokovic will be comparatively fresh.

The Serb has spent a snappy 10 hours 6 minutes on court and will have had an extra day to rest the knee that was surgically repaired June 5.

He also owns a 5-1 career record against Musetti and most recently came back to beat the youngster after trailing him two sets to one at the French Open — three years after Djokovic came back to defeat Musetti after the Italian held a two-sets-to-none lead and retired in the fifth set at Roland Garros.

Musetti might actually be looking forward to playing Djokovic

on grass for a change.

He was moving well enough Wednesday in a battle that rarely saw Fritz leave the baseline on purpose.

Fritz was competing for his first Grand Slam semifinal berth, too, and he was the hotter player after winning the title at a warmup tournament on grass in Eastbourne, England, heading into Wimbledon. He was seeking to erase the sting of a quarterfinal loss here in 2022, when he fell in a tight five-set marathon against Rafael Nadal, and said he was nervy in the opening set Wednesday.

If he was nervous to start, it wasn't apparent. The 26-year-old from California began strongly, dictating points with fine serving

and cracking groundstrokes.

Musetti, to his credit, was trying to employ some variation in his game against Fritz. The Italian is one of the rare players on tour who employs a one-handed backhand, and he's capable of mixing in slices and dropshots and shots that change the shape of a rally, not just the pace.

His touch wasn't deft enough in the first set as he kept sending the ball thwacking into the net tape, but he kept at it. Eventually, it frustrated Fritz.

"That's probably something that I say I found it more, how can I say, worse for the other guys to be having not each shot the same," Musetti said. "Especially with a good baseliner like Taylor, if you play every time flat, I cannot win

a point."

Fritz said he was bothered by the wind on Court No. 1 and found it hard to play his power game against Musetti's diverse shot selection. The American said earlier this week that he favors grass because it rewards big hitting instantly, making it worth the risk of unloading maximum power into a single groundstroke.

But between the conditions affecting his serve and the subtle variation of the ball he was getting from Musetti, Fritz couldn't find his groove. Musetti didn't need to play the cleanest match of his career. He just needed to keep Fritz guessing.

"I felt like probably the biggest thing was when I'm playing someone that plays like him, I really need to be able to set up and be able to generate power, really pinpoint where I want to hit the shot," Fritz said. "I have to be very accurate because you're not going to be able to hit the ball as hard off the dead slices."

Fritz will try to regroup at the Paris Olympics, which begin later this month, but said he is slightly worried about an injury he suffered at the French Open that affects him more when he slides on clay than it does when he moves on grass.

He said he has a sports hernia, which commonly occurs in the groin or lower abdominal area.

"It was much better because on grass I'm not sliding," Fritz said. "It's more of an injury that really bothers me when I'm sliding, separating my legs a lot."

As for Musetti, he looks forward to his seventh meeting with Djokovic as a more mature, more experienced and more accomplished player than he was the last time they faced off at the French Open. He called Wednesday's win the best day of his career, a victory he attributed to all of the lessons he has absorbed from losing to players such as Djokovic in the past.

"Probably [those] losses with all big champions made me think, made me work harder," Musetti said. "The win of today is probably the result. I think I can have a chance with [Djokovic] the next round."

Wimbledon, women's semifinals 8 a.m., ESPN



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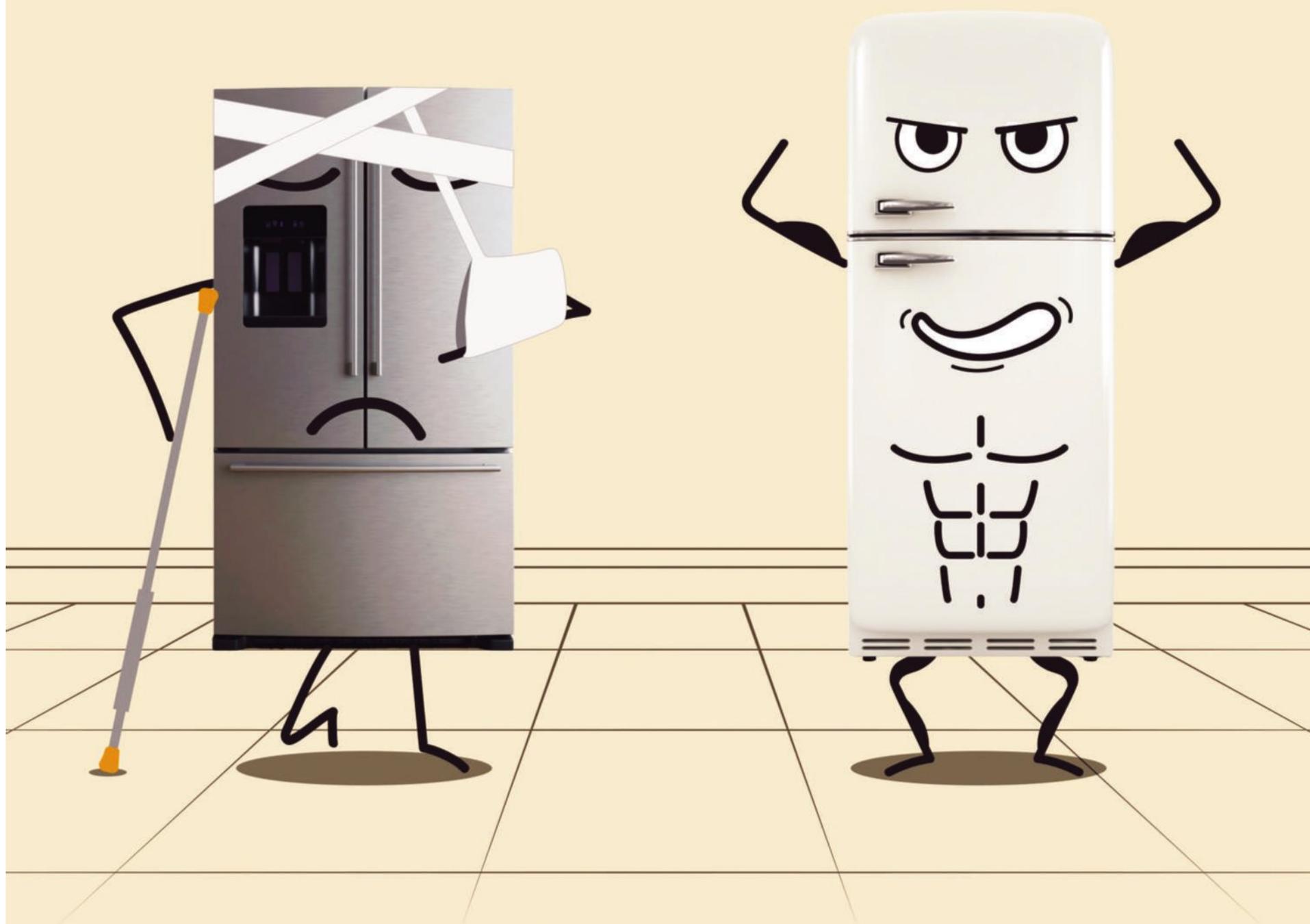
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LOCAL LIVING



Your fridge isn't built to last

Why kitchen appliances aren't what they used to be **PAGE 4**

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ON THE COVERIllustration by José L. Soto/The
Washington Post; iStock**HOW TO**

This is how you should safely clean up from painting

BY JEANNE HUBER

Q: What is the best way to clean up after painting?**A:** The reward of painting walls, trim or furniture is instant: Everything looks new and fresh. But then comes the cleanup. What do you do with brushes, rollers and paint trays coated with paint? Cleaning the tools properly allows you to use them again. But you don't want to send paint down the drain or onto your landscaping.

Most paint today is water-based. It's a liquid when you apply it, so it's easy to overlook the fact that the part that stays behind once the water evaporates is mostly plastic — usually acrylic but also sometimes vinyl or another polymer. If paint is washed down the drain, the plastics can clog a septic system, add to sludge in a community sewer system or wind up in rivers and eventually the ocean as microplastics.

You should avoid washing paint down a drain — especially a storm drain. In most communities, storm drains empty directly into the nearest stream, river or bay, without any treatment.

But how do you wash tools and not send the wash water down a drain? Here are some suggestions.

Choose equipment wisely

- If you are just touching up paint, consider using an inexpensive chip brush. You can treat it as disposable, or wash it. Because the bristles are sparse and short, these brushes don't hold much paint, making them easy to wash.

- You might also consider roller covers to be disposable — but that doesn't mean you need a fresh one for each coat or each day of a multiday project. If you wrap tools tightly in a plastic bag or plastic wrap between sessions and don't wait more than a day or two to use them again, you can clean up only at the end.

- To minimize cleanup of a paint tray, buy a disposable liner or cover the empty tray with a plastic bag that's big enough to completely enclose it.

- Using a clip-on spout for a paint can (such as the Allway paint can spout, \$1.99 at Ace Hardware) helps keep the rim clean, which in turn means that when you finally put the lid back on, the paint seals well and stays usable for touch-ups or other projects.



ISTOCK

Once dry, paint is mostly plastic so washing brushes in a sink can cause clogs and pollute waterways.**While painting**

- Before you begin, dampen your brush or roller with water, then work out the excess by flicking the brush or spinning the roller, or by brushing or rolling back and forth on cardboard. Dampening the tools first makes them easier to wash later. High quality brushes hold more paint partly because they have space for paint under the ferrule, the metal part that connects the bristles to the handle. It seems that pre-dampening the bristles with water helps keep paint in that well from drying prematurely.

- If you get interrupted, wrap your brush or roller in plastic if it will be unused for more than a few minutes. If you're wearing disposable gloves, one easy solution is to grab the bristles with one hand and then pull off the glove with the other hand, encasing the brush in the process. You'll want a fresh disposable glove when you resume painting.

When it's time to clean up

- Scrape as much paint off the roller or brush as you can. The curved part of a painter's 5-in-1 tool works great as a squeegee for a roller, and the blade on this tool is effective on a brush. Then work the roller or brush back and forth on newspaper or cardboard

until you've removed as much paint as possible. (Dispose of that paper or cardboard in the trash.)

- Clemson University recommends using three five-gallon buckets, each filled about two-thirds with water. If you're washing multiple tools, start with the brushes, which probably hold less paint to wash out than the rollers.

- Wash the tools in the first bucket and scrub them to work out embedded paint.

- If you have a paint comb, use it to help remove paint between bristles on a brush. Comb from the ferrule toward the tips of the bristles.

- Flick the brush or spin the roller over the bucket, so the sides capture the splatter, to get out as much of the wash water as you can.

- Pour a little undiluted detergent onto the bristles, then wash the tools in again in the second bucket. (I've found that laundry detergent works great for this. I tried using an eco laundry detergent, but while it's fine for laundry, it didn't work as well for this purpose. Wear gloves, though, because laundry detergent is quite alkaline and will dry your skin.)

- Wash the tools again in the third bucket. Once a brush is

clean, smooth the bristles into the brush's original shape.

- Hang the brush to dry, or place it across something like a yogurt container where the handle and ferrule support it but air can circulate. Most ferrules can rust, so do not leave a wet brush sitting on a surface where the stain could be an issue.

- Store dry brushes in their original cardboard wrappers. If you don't have those, make replacements from old file folders or cardboard about the thickness of a cereal box.

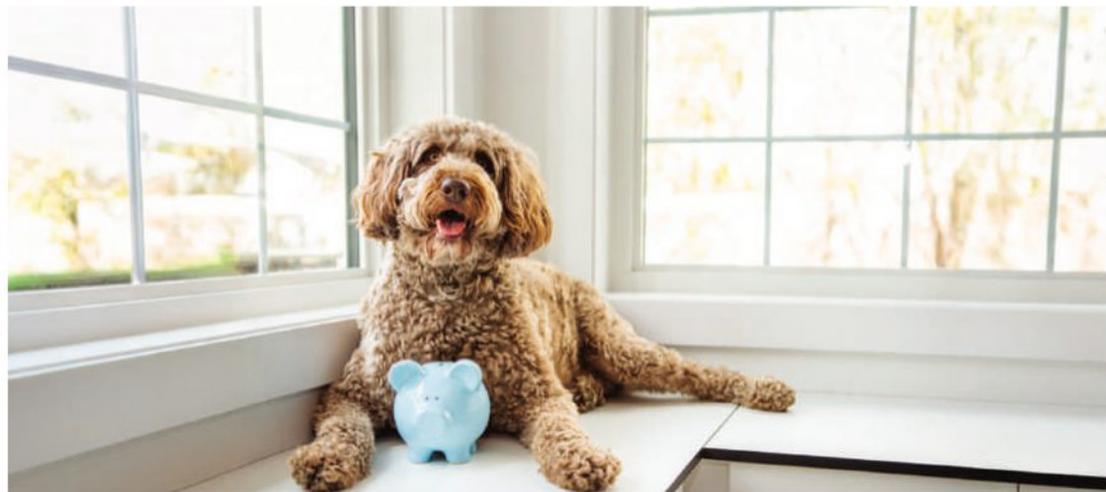
- After you wash all your tools, set the buckets aside where they won't be jostled. Add secure lids if there is any chance that young children might be around them. Toddlers can easily tip into five-gallon buckets and not be able to right themselves.

- Solids in the wash water should settle to the bottom after about a day. Then you can pour the clear water down a sink drain (not a storm drain). Scrape the sludge at the bottom into cat litter in a cardboard box or other disposable container, and put that in the trash.

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It's not just you: Appliances simply aren't built to last anymore

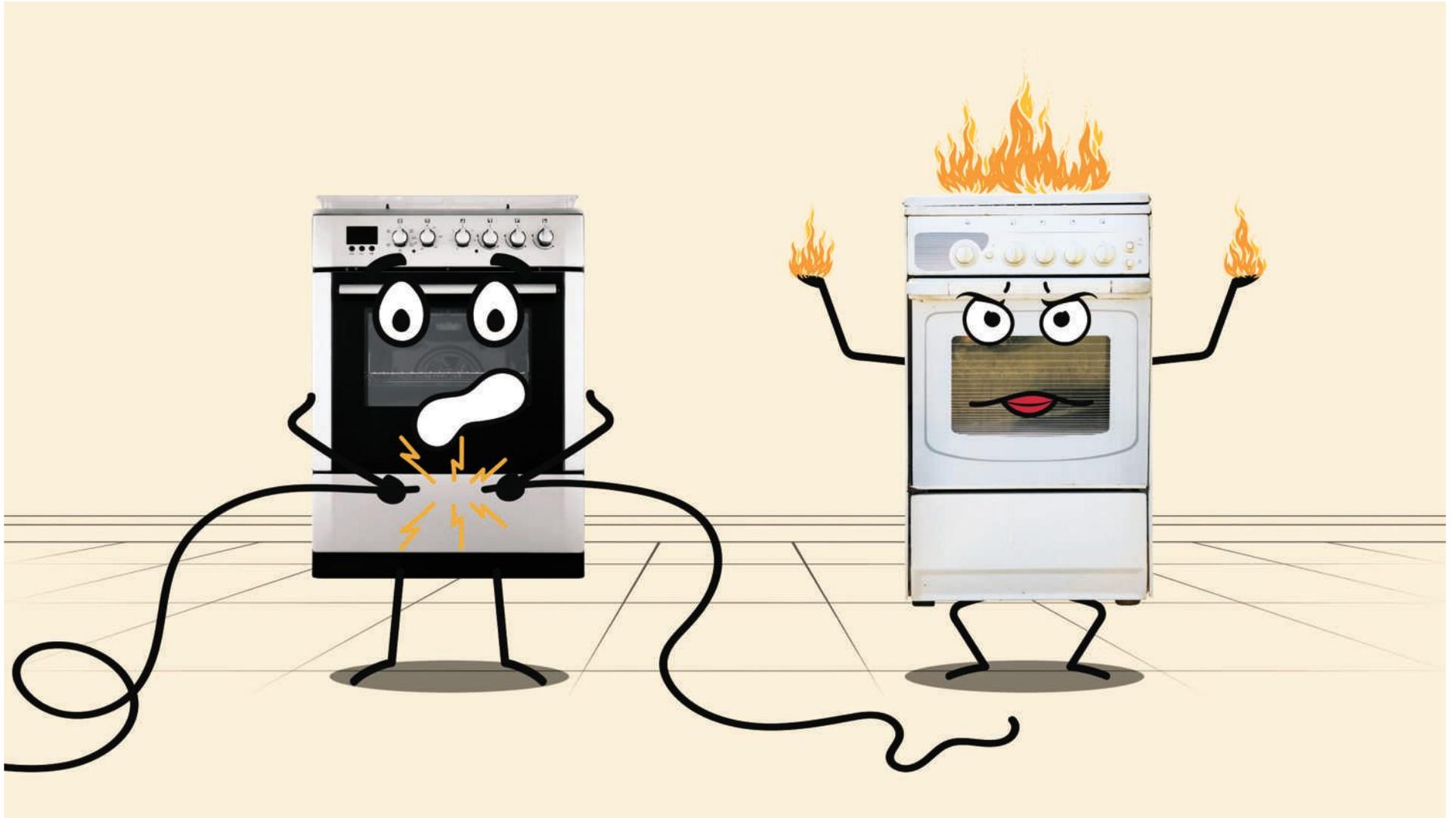


ILLUSTRATION BY JOSÉ L. SOTO/THE WASHINGTON POST; ISTOCK

BY RACHEL KURZIUS
AND JACLYN PEISER

New refrigerators, ovens and dishwashers come with all sorts of novel features — you can see your vacation photos on a screen on your fridge door, remotely monitor food temperature or connect your dishwasher to the internet. They're also less expensive and more efficient than in decades past.

But many of the latest models of kitchen appliances have shorter life spans than those of yesteryear. Thanks to how complex they are, they require maintenance sooner, and the cost of repair often rivals the price tag of a new appliance altogether. Plus, it turns out a lot of people simply aren't using most of the newfangled features.

Probably nobody knows the particular limitations of new appliances better than the people tasked with repairing them.

"We used to be able to tell people a dishwasher could last 15 years. And now you're lucky to get five to seven out of a dishwasher," says David Costanzo,

owner of Appliance King of America in Boynton Beach, Fla.

At home, Costanzo has an original GE fridge from 1935 that he says "works perfectly," but these days, "you're lucky to get 10 to 15 years out of a refrigerator. And 10 to 15 years ago, that number was closer to 20 years."

One major culprit is the switch from mechanical to electrical systems powering the appliances.

"There are a lot more sensors in appliances," says Darin Williams, owner of Reliable Appliance in Anchorage. "Now, you have digital integration into motors versus strictly mechanical motors. And so with a lot of things being geared more towards digital, those types of components are more apt to fail than something that is analog and mechanical."

On a modern appliance, you're less likely to turn a dial that triggers a motor (a mechanical system) than press a button on a screen that connects a

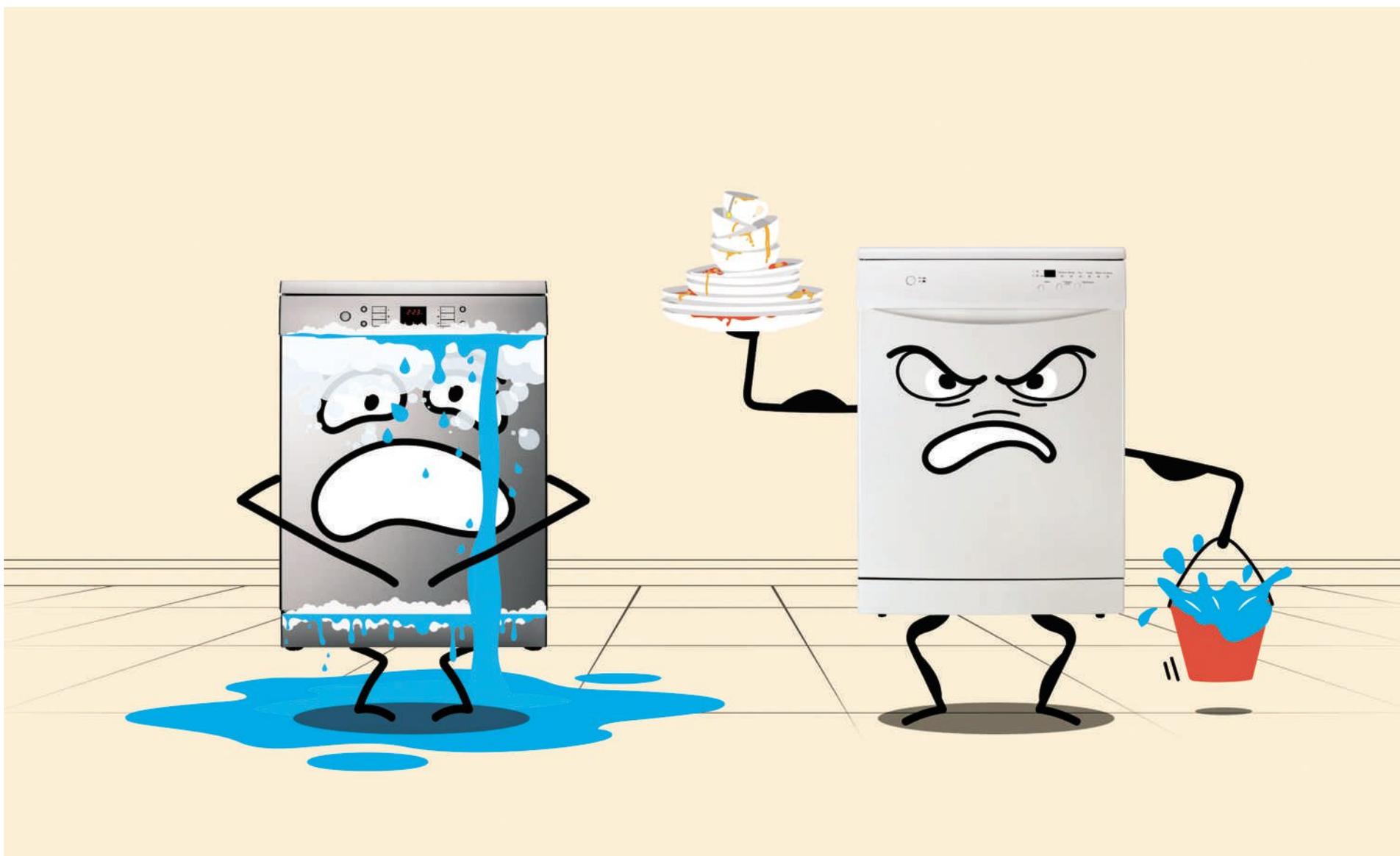


ILLUSTRATION BY JOSÉ L. SOTO/THE WASHINGTON POST; ISTOCK

bunch of tiny components to a motherboard (digital integration). More complexity means more can go wrong.

"The motherboard controls everything," says Leonardo Ben Fraj, owner of Optimal Appliance Repair in D.C. And that has major implications when things go awry, because the control board often costs about half the price of the whole appliance. In other words, it could set you back nearly as much money to fix it as it would to just buy a new one.

And even if you want to repair rather than replace, you might not be able to do so easily. When it comes to electronic components, "the pace of change is so fast that a company will make something one year, and in two years down the line, they don't make that component," says Michael Pecht, a distinguished professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Maryland. "They're making the next generation and that new component may not fit the old one."

Pecht has consulted for major U.S. and European Union brands. He says some of their CEOs and

vice presidents lamented the difficulties of competing with Chinese companies, which often promise extremely inexpensive products. "There's a lot of pressure for them to also make it cheaper," he says. "So when you're thinking about making it cheaper, what do you do? You cut down on materials — you don't use the best, highest quality materials."

You do use plastic — a lot of it. Which, of course, breaks more easily than metal. "One of the big things we see, in terms of breakdowns, are parts breaking," says Daniel Wroclawski, a reporter with Consumer Reports who focuses on home appliances. Components such as shelving, ice makers, and water and ice dispensers are all more vulnerable than they used to be.

Plastic does have some benefits: It's easily molded into complex parts, and its light weight means it's inexpensive to ship. And metal isn't perfect — it can rust, for instance. But even when metal is being used nowadays, the quality is diminished compared to the heavier-duty metal

"So when you're thinking about making it cheaper, what do you do? You cut down on materials — you don't use the best, highest quality materials."

Michael Pecht,
Distinguished professor of
mechanical engineering at
the University of Maryland

found in appliances from 20 or 30 years ago. "The metal is a little bit thinner. The wires are a little bit thinner," says David Oliva, president of RD Appliance Service in Plainview, N.Y.

Manufacturers continue to push smart appliances, meaning they're connected to the internet. Wroclawski says that there's no indication yet that those features have led to more breakdowns. In fact, internet connectivity can at times even help with repairs, especially remotely. "But there is that potential as you make these things more complex, you increase the chance for something to break down at some point," he says. (Cybersecurity experts also warn that smart appliances can make your in-home online network more vulnerable, and connected appliances are constantly sending collected data about use back to manufacturers.)

And this added risk comes with little payoff because the majority of consumers aren't using their appliances' WiFi features, according to surveys conducted by Consumer Reports. "Most people who own them

don't use the smarts or aren't even aware that the smarts are there," Wroclawski says. "Frankly, the use cases aren't that compelling."

Manufacturers haven't given up on trying to add more functions, though.

"It's almost like an appliance space race," says Williams, the refurbisher in Alaska. "The manufacturer that comes out with the coolest thing that excites the consumer market is more likely to sell that product. Whereas when the consumer actually takes hold of that product, they realize the feature is not something that they even need or use."

Indeed, when asked what people should keep in mind when buying new appliances, Ben Fraj, the D.C. repair person, said the bells and whistles are often a distraction at best, and a potential for an early repair at worst. The best appliances, in his opinion, "don't have time for this BS."

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One bed, two blankets: We tested the Scandinavian sleep method

BY MARI-JANE WILLIAMS

There are plenty of Scandinavian exports worth embracing, including saunas, Lego, Dansk tableware, the Billy bookcase, Kransekake, Marimekko. So when the Scandinavian sleep method started popping up everywhere on social media, I took note.

The idea: Two people share a bed but use separate covers. The promise: a better night's sleep. The bedding arrangement is popular in other European countries as well; on a trip to Paris a couple of years ago, our hotel room bed was outfitted with two sets of blankets and top sheets.

But does the method work? And how do you make a bed with two blankets? We put it to the test. We gave five couples two twin-size down alternative comforters each and asked them to try the method for a week. Here's what they had to say.

Tester 1

Typical sleeping arrangement: Queen-size bed with a flat sheet, blanket and comforter.

Pain points: Tester 1's husband accuses her of being a chronic sheet stealer, but she thinks the

main issue is that they operate at different temperatures: "I am a nuclear furnace when I sleep, while my husband is a block of ice," she says. Regardless, it seems like someone is always getting shortchanged on covers, or someone is tossing and turning.

How they carried out the test: They used the separate comforters, no flat sheet or blankets.

The experience: She likes to throw her foot or leg out from under the covers when she gets too hot, and the separate covers allowed her to do this on both sides, instead of just one. Another bonus: Lounging in bed on weekends was better with the extra covers. "It was absolutely luxuriant to take over the whole bed and both comforters and do the crossword puzzle," she says. Her husband liked that he could roll over and move around in bed without affecting his wife.

The bed-making problem: They don't typically make their bed, so this wasn't an issue. "No shade on anyone who is put together enough in the morning to arrange their bedding, but we usually leave it in a chaotic state, and tend to reassemble the tangle of sheets into something more coherent as we're going to bed,

not when we wake up," she says.

The verdict: The arrangement worked well for them, and they may implement it in the future. "The only hesitation is that we have so much bedding, buying more almost becomes a storage problem at this point," she says. "But I think we slept better and more comfortably, so if I see twin comforters on sale anytime soon, there's a good chance we will make the switch."

Tester 2

Typical sleeping arrangement: Queen-size bed with a top sheet and a duvet.

Pain points: Tester 2 and her husband often go to bed at different times, and many nights one of them has to get up to tend to their toddler, which can be disruptive. There are also issues with sharing covers, she says: "One of us (a.k.a. me) is allegedly a cover hog, which means the other of us sleeps in a defensive crouch with respect to the shared covers as a way to maintain some blanket."

How they carried out the test: They started with the two twin-size down alternative duvets provided, but her husband didn't like the texture, so he swapped his out for a twin-size quilt they had. And

she realized she preferred a bigger blanket, so she swapped in a queen-size quilt. They kept their queen-size flat sheet.

The experience: The test went well for this couple. Even the difference of opinions on the blankets ended up working in their favor. "The idea that we could each seek out a blanket with our preferred texture and warmth level was an improvement on sharing one quilt," she says. "It was great to each have our own quilt and made for more restful sleeping."

The bed-making problem: They don't make the bed daily but like to do it when time allows. Settling on one twin quilt for him and a queen-size quilt for her helped here. During the day, they made the bed with the queen-size cover and folded the twin cover across the bottom of the bed.

The verdict: They said the arrangement was a big improvement on their previous blanket-sharing situation and plan to continue to use it.

Tester 3

Typical sleeping arrangement: Queen-size bed with a top sheet and comforter.

Pain points: Tester 3 says her

husband is an occasional cover-stealer, and she's a light sleeper who wakes easily if he is tossing and turning.

How they carried out the test: They used the twin comforters and skipped the flat sheet.

The experience: Her husband tossed and turned a good bit one night, and got up to use the bathroom several times on another night, but it didn't disturb her. She says, though, that she's so used to his restlessness that she might not have been disturbed even while sharing covers. She liked being able to stick her leg out from under the covers on either side. But there were also drawbacks, including getting overheated. "I think during the night, the excess parts of our blankets would overlap on one person or the other," she says.

The bed-making problem: They folded the twin comforters lengthwise and placed them side by side to give the bed a neat appearance.

The verdict: They plan to keep their original bedding configuration. "I don't think we saw enough of a positive impact to switch to two blankets," she says. She also likes having a neatly

SEE SLEEP ON 8

Shared vs. separate bed covers

SLEEP FROM 7

made bed, which was another strike against the Scandinavian method.

Tester 4

Typical sleeping arrangement: King-size bed with a flat sheet, blanket and duvet.

Pain points: Tester 4 likes to have covers tucked snugly around her, while her husband struggles to keep his side tucked. Sometimes that leads to an uneven distribution of blankets. She maintains that because his covers are untucked, they bunch up at the bottom, creating the impression that she's stolen them when,

in fact, she has not. He admits this possibility: "I think I kick covers off and then overcompensate when trying to recover (ha)," he says. "Then the groggy tug-of-war begins."

How they carried out the test: They used the two twin duvets provided and dragged out old twin-size top sheets from when

their kids were little, giving them completely separate covers.

The experience: The test took cover-stealing out of the equation, and she reports that she was less aware of when her husband got in and out of bed (he goes to bed later — and gets up earlier — than she does). "Something has to go pretty wrong for you to end up with the other person's covers," her husband says. "I don't really see a downside to it. It's the happy medium between the freedom of separate beds and the traditional way that just doesn't work for many people." It didn't solve his issues with keeping his covers in order; sometimes he woke up with just the duvet and couldn't find the top sheet. She liked the fact that he couldn't blame her for this problem anymore. Overall, it improved their quality of sleep.

The bed-making problem: They typically don't make their bed, so this wasn't an issue.

The verdict: They have returned to their usual sleeping arrangements for now, but may switch at some point in the future if they find bedding they like.

Tester 5

Typical sleeping arrangement: A queen bed with a flat sheet, blanket and comforter.

Pain points: Tester 1 says their covers come untucked at times, but overall, they don't have issues with sharing. She sleeps "warm," so prefers a cool room with a fan pointing at her, and she often wakes up under just the sheet.

How they carried out the test: They started with just the separate comforters but missed having a top sheet, so after a week, they brought back a shared queen-size sheet.

The experience: While they slept well during the test, they didn't notice much of a difference between sharing a comforter or having separate ones. "We already have a comforter we like enough and both of us prefer to have a flat sheet between the comforter and ourselves," she says. After a few nights, they added a sheet and blanket for her partner, who sleeps cooler. And after a week, they brought back the queen-size top sheet. Overall, they didn't notice much of a difference sleeping with two duvets, possibly because they don't struggle with sharing covers.

The bed-making problem: It's easier to make the bed with fewer covers, she says, but it definitely looked less tidy. When her parents came to visit, they tossed their regular comforter over the bed for a neater appearance.

The verdict: They felt pretty neutral about the test, and have gone back to their regular sleeping arrangement. "I think this is fine when we travel ... but isn't a huge benefit at home," she says.

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MELINDA DIMAURO

Enough with the junk: The best souvenirs are home decor

BY JENNIFER BARGER

Journeying to a new place lets you try out what living in another culture feels and looks like, whether you're exploring the adobe house-filled streets of Santa Fe or the lantern-lit alleys of an ancient Moroccan city. Many travelers, dazzled by the rug sellers of Istanbul or the pottery workshops of Oaxaca, return with worldly housewares or art to decorate their homes.

"A textile, a clay bowl or an object you pick up at a flea market connects you to a time that you've enjoyed, a memory of a place," says Hilary Robertson, a Brooklyn prop stylist and author of "Nomad at Home: Designing the Home More Traveled." "If you can't move to Marrakesh or Kyoto, you can at least re-create something of the feeling."

But snapping up the best items for your particular home requires a bit of strategy and advance planning. Here's how to shop smart, how to get your treasures back in one piece and what to do with them upon your return.

Do your homework

You usually won't turn up Indigenous handicrafts or interesting local art at an airport store or the hotel gift shop. "So do

research before you go, looking up artisan networks, finding out which days flea markets operate, and figuring out what you might even be able to buy in a given place," says Rachna Sachasinh, owner of Tikkiwallah, an online shop selling fair-trade Thai and Laotian pillow covers, blankets and other textiles.

Seek tips on what to buy and where to shop from your hotel concierge (or short-term rental owner), and via the websites and social media accounts of official tourism boards. You can also flip through old-school guidebooks (Lonely Planet, Rick Steves), which tend to concentrate on local retailers, rather than the location of every West Elm in Mexico City. TikTok and Instagram also offer potential shopping info, but be wary of paid brand placements.

While cool art and vintage home decor are available at most destinations, "you'll find more handmade items like textiles, rugs and baskets if you travel to places like Morocco, India and Mexico, which still have living crafts cultures," Sachasinh says.

Consider hiring a shopping pro

To get straight to the treasure hunting, you could hire a tour guide who specializes in shopping for a few hours. Look for market- or retail-specific experiences in



VIK M. PHOTOGRAPHY

ABOVE: The Peacock Pavilions hotel in Marrakesh; its proprietor leads travelers on day-long expeditions through the city's souks. LEFT: The main salon at the Peacock Pavilions hotel.

your destination on travel booking sites such as Tripadvisor and Tours by Locals; using the name of a specific place ("Istanbul Grand Bazaar" or "Oaxaca pottery workshops") can further winnow your search.

You can also try a simple online search to turn up market-savvy private guides such as Buenos Aires Shop Hop (guided jaunts to leather workshops and vintage markets in Argentina) or Maryam Montague, the proprietor of Peacock Pavilions hotel in Marrakesh, who takes travelers on day-long expeditions through the city's souks looking for fuzzy tribal rugs, bright pottery and leather poufs.

Or go on a crafts- or shopping-focused trip. Tour companies such as Ace Camps and Thread Caravan host week-long trips to meet artisans and make things alongside them in destinations such as Perú (try

SEE TRAVEL ON 10

How to shop smart when you travel

TRAVEL FROM 9

weaving in the Sacred Valley near Machu Picchu) or Japan (learn how to use shibori indigo dyes or make pottery).

Luxury trip-planning company Indagare offers frequent style-centric small group tours to Mallorca, Rajasthan and Paris with dinners in designers' homes, market excursions and meetups with artists. Grant K. Gibson, an interior designer, leads small groups to destinations such as Jaipur, India and Oaxaca, Mexico, where they visit showrooms, learn about block printing and woodworking techniques, and usually come back with suitcases full of merchandise.

"Design touches on so many passion points — art, history and culture, food and wine — that trips like these are a great linchpin for learning, exploration and meeting fellow design enthusiasts," says Indagare founder and chief executive Melissa Bradley.

Know what to look for

To support local artisans, look for fair-trade crafts stores, which pay creators fairly for their products and tend to stock goods representative of a destination. Other top bets: flea markets focused on handmade or antique goods, museum shops and government-sponsored artisan boutiques or networks. For instance, Artesanías de Colombia shops in Bogotá and Cartagena hawk rope



ALETHEA INGRACA/PEACOCK PAVILIONS

Maryam Montague, proprietor of Peacock Pavilions hotel, suggests bringing extra luggage if you plan to shop abroad: "It's usually cheaper to pay for an extra checked bag than to ship a lot of things home."

hammocks and palm fiber baskets produced by Indigenous weavers.

"And visiting an artisan workshop might give the deepest connection to something handmade, since you get talk to the crafter or even make something beside them," says Sachasinh, who recommends the weaving workshops and the blanket- and table-runner-stuffed store at Ock Pop Tok in Luang Prabang, Laos. At the Seattle Glass Blowing Studio, artists create the delicate bowls and glasses the Pacific Northwest city is known for — and teach beginners how to make their own.

Think about how you'll get it home

Serendipity and impulse inspire many souvenir purchases. But if you want a Turkish rug for your living room or a vintage Parisian painting to match your bathroom tile, be sure to travel with photos and measurements of the space you have in mind. "I always bring a measuring tape and swatches of any fabric I want to match, too," Montague says.

Planning on carrying a lot of items home on the plane? Stash a collapsible duffel (Paravel makes a clever zip-down one) in your luggage, or, for larger purchases, pack an extra, empty hard-sided suitcase. "It's usually cheaper to pay for an extra checked bag than to ship a lot of things home," Montague says. Know that oil paintings can be taken off their

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



GRANT K. GIBSON



MELINDA DIMAURO

FROM LEFT: Antique lassi cups from Jaipur, India, styled by designer Grant Gibson. A detail at the Peacock Pavilions hotel. This bathroom has a stool from Egypt, and a portrait and lassi cup from India.



GRANT K. GIBSON

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

stretchers and rolled up, and that you can purchase a throw pillow cover that takes up little luggage space and buy the bulky insert when you arrive home.

"I'm wary of checking a bag with breakables, though," says Bradley, who has ferried glass and pottery back from Cambodia and South Africa in a hard-sided carry-on.

And whether you are two hours away by car or five time zones away by plane, retailers that sell bulky items can generally guide you toward a shipper, even though it's often not cheap. "I had this great farmhouse dining table shipped from the Paris flea market, and I've had people on my trips to India send home inlaid dressers," Gibson says.

Get creative

Many housewares bought on your travels can be repurposed, and even ordinary goods found in other countries can seem special or elevated compared to what you would get at home. "I go to Mexican hardware stores because even basic items like door hooks or storage bins can be so colorful and fun," Robertson says.

A Navajo rug can serve as a tablecloth; a beaded Maasai collar morphs into a sculpture when displayed on a wire stand. Even the simplest souvenirs — a vintage postcard of Yellowstone National Park, a scrap of fabric — look terrific when nicely framed.

Grouping disparate travel finds on a gallery wall can make them seem cohesive. "I have the most random ... stuff hung on the wall of the staircase at my house — a painting from India, a brass bowl I got in Turkey," says San Francisco interior designer Chelsea Sachs. "It's like a chronicle of my life, and these things remind me of special moments when I get back home." Indagare's Bradley arranges Iranian tiles, Burmese boxes and Peruvian ceramics amid the novels and art books on her shelves.

Fabrics, buttons and other easy-to-transport materials you snap up on the road can turn into home accents, even if you aren't especially crafty. Bring home a couple pieces of washi — a Japanese mulberry paper so storied it's recognized by UNESCO — to hot-glue onto a lampshade or inside a wooden tray. A basket or other object can be turned into a light fixture. "I carried a huge antique rattan birdcage home on a ferry from Provincetown once, and now it's a chandelier," Robertson says.

And almost any textile — a striped Peruvian blanket, a vintage quilt from a flea market — can be fashioned into a throw

pillow or shower curtain by your dry cleaner, or used to reupholster a chair seat. "Sometimes stuff has to hang around for a while before you know what you'll do with it," Sachs says.

You might not want to amass a cabinet full of souvenir teacups,

spoons or snow globes like your great grandparents did. But the concept of picking up one small object everywhere you travel still has some validity; it might save you from overbuying, and even kitschy trinkets can summon memories. Think about scoring a

holiday tree ornament or small flower vase every time you go on a trip, or save a few coins from each foreign country you visit to pile into a bowl on your coffee table. "Pieces from different places become integral to your home and allow you to reconnect with a

destination and its aesthetic," Bradley says.

Jennifer Barger writes the Substack "The Souvenirist," which explores where to travel and what to buy when you get there. She's on Instagram at @dcjnell.

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One man's quest to develop a chemical-free lawn seed mix

BY LINA ZELDOVICH

Jackson Madnick, a 76-year-old resident of Wayland, Mass., rarely mows, waters or fertilizes his lawn, and he never sprays it with weed killers. Even so, his grass looks like a thriving, emerald-green meadow year-round. It emerges green from under the snow, and it keeps its vibrant hue in summer droughts. If that sounds too good to be true, Madnick has even more surprises to share: He bred this grass himself.

Madnick became a citizen grass scientist after his cat, Kitty, died of cancer in 1999. "I moved into a house near a golf course, and I had a cat that went outside all the time," he says. "And within two months of moving in there, she got a huge lump and she died." His vet suggested that lawn chemicals may have played a part.

As he researched his cat's death, Madnick, a multimedia show designer who planned concerts, fireworks, theme park shows and other events, learned that the traditional American lawn is a lot less green than it appears.

When fertilizers and herbicides became widely available after World War II, manufacturers were eager to sell them not only to farmers but also to homeowners, says Nancy Gift, a weed ecologist who is the executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension. To drive up sales, they promoted perfect plush



ABOVE: Jackson Madnick tested thousands of seed combinations to find the best one. **RIGHT:** He inspects a clear plastic tube containing extremely long grass roots.



PHOTOS BY IARITZA MENJIVAR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



PHOTOS BY IARITZA MENJIVAR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

LEFT: Jackson Madnick with his dog, Zoe, who is the “spokesdog” for Pearl’s Premium, the grass mix that he developed. BELOW: Madnick works with the plastic tubing he uses to measure grass root growth.

and do something different,” he says. But the mixes died, just like the solo grasses before them. He doubled down, covering his patio with numbered pots for different ratios of his seven-seed mix and logging the proportions, the amount of water he used and how long each mix survived. Madnick wasn’t secretive about his efforts, but he did keep it fairly private. “I didn’t want people to think I was a mad scientist,” he says.

The work was time-consuming. “I did hundreds of these at a time, and it did take me a good portion of the day,” Madnick says. His partner, Betsy West, occasionally questioned the endeavor. “Why are you spending so much time on this?” she would ask, when yet another batch wilted and died.

“A couple of times I almost gave up,” Madnick says. “But then I read a book about Thomas Edison that said that if he stopped one experiment short of discovering the lightbulb, he might not have ever discovered the lightbulb. It was perseverance and luck. So, I

SEE GRASS ON 14

green turfs as a status symbol. But the amount of water and chemicals needed to keep grass beautiful can be harmful to the environment, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

So Madnick wondered if he could redesign lawn care from the ground up. He wanted to find a grass that didn’t need chemicals and required little water.

He read up on turf science, spending hours in libraries. He planted different varieties of grass seed in paper coffee cups in his backyard. “I grew close to 70 kinds of grasses from around the world that supposedly needed less chemicals and less water,” he says. But none of those grasses liked his harsh treatment. “A year later, after a hot summer, they were all dead.” The only survivors were three varieties that thrive in the desert — cactus-like species that were too prickly to walk on.

Madnick kept at it, though. He asked several turf scientists for hardy-grass recommendations and narrowed his list to seven varieties, including red fescue, tall fescue and Kentucky blue. Hoping to find a winning combination, he planted those seeds in different ratios.

“I had a theory that maybe the right seeds in the right proportions might have an interaction





PHOTOS BY IARITZA MENJIVAR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

A citizen scientist's grass experiment

GRASS FROM 13

continued.”

Five years and 7,000 mixes later, Madnick's efforts paid off. One container grew a lush green grass with an elegant thin blade. Madnick couldn't believe his luck, but when he picked up the pot, he knew why it was thriving. “The roots were so long, they were coming out of the bottom of the pot.”

When planted in the right proportions, the grasses formed a symbiotic relationship that allowed them to sprout unusually long and robust roots. Typical lawn grasses grow three- to four-inch roots; Madnick's mix boasted roots nearly twice that long. When the mix is planted in soil rather than a pot, the roots reach the groundwater, making the lawn more resilient and self-reliant. “From that one ‘aha’ batch, I grew 3,000 more trials until finally I optimized the interaction,” he says.

He kept tweaking the mix until the roots became 12 to 14 inches long, then he began selling the mix as Pearl's Premium. He named the grass after his daughter and his mother, who shared the name “Pearl.” “My mother was an environmentalist and she taught me to care about the planet,” Madnick says.



The key lies in the mix. “When you have more species growing together, you actually have a greater ecosystem function,” says Rebecca Barak, a conservation scientist at the Chicago Botanic Garden who studies seed mixes for prairie restoration.

Her own group is experimenting with mixes of fescues as an alternative to the more commonly used lawn seeds such as Kentucky bluegrass. Fescues, she says, are tough and slow-growing grasses, and their presence in Madnick's mix could explain why the grass is hardy and low-maintenance. “They don't really require fertilizing and they do grow these really deep and kind of thick mats of roots,” she says. “Because they grow so slowly, they just don't use as much water.”

Madnick says Pearl's Premium requires initial watering to sprout its uber-roots but needs little care afterward. “You can mow it, but you don't have to,” he says. “If you don't mow it, it flips over and becomes a meadow.”

As Madnick honed his combo, the roots kept growing longer, gradually reaching three, four and even five feet long. He began selling it to drought-prone places such as Utah, California and countries in the Middle East. Over the years, Pearl's Premium has won several awards, including a \$50,000 prize at the Mass-Challenge competition in 2010 and the Boston Museum of Science “Invented Here” innovation

LEFT: Madnick says Pearl's Premium requires initial watering to sprout its roots but then needs little care. ABOVE: A diagram demonstrates that Pearl's Premium lawn seeds produce longer roots than traditional grass varieties.

award in 2013.

And Madnick continues to work on his mix. He began adding some organic fertilizers to help the grass grow even longer roots. Eventually, the roots became so extensive that he couldn't experiment in pots anymore, so he moved on to using long, transparent plastic tubes that allow him to see the roots and measure their progress. Now in its seventh generation, the grass grows roots that are at least six feet deep, but Madnick wants to see exactly how long they can grow. He and West now run the company and the experiments together, from inside their home.

“In my kitchen, I have a clear plastic tube that's eight feet tall, and I'm growing it in the tube to see if it can get eight or more feet,” he says. “They might actually grow longer than that, but that's the biggest tube I could buy without gluing tubes together.”

Lina Zeldovich is a freelance writer in New York City and the author of the book “The Living Medicine: How a Lifesaving Cure Was Nearly Lost — and Why It Will Rescue Us When Antibiotics Fail.”



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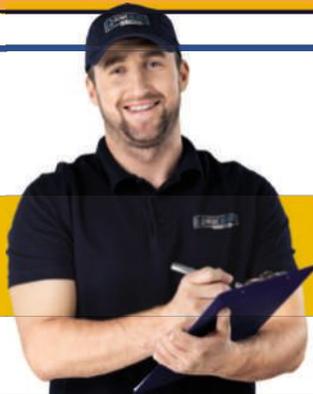
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HOUSE OF THE WEEK

One of the last ‘flounder’ houses in Old Town

BY SOPHIA SOLANO

Amid the boxy Federal-style houses that distinguish Old Town is a lopsided sea green structure that captures the eye like a fish out of water. The “flounder house” at 511 Queen St., now on the market for \$2.9 million, is one of fewer than 20 such architectural oddities remaining in Alexandria.

These houses have a single-slope roof as opposed to the double slope of a gable roof. They are called flounder houses after the species of flatfish, which like all flatfish have both eyes on one side of the head instead of an eye on both sides. Some of the oldest surviving flounder houses are in Alexandria, and it’s unclear why some Revolutionary-era builders chose the design.

The Queen Street house was built around 1784. Its owner, Rosemary Furfaro, considered it her duty to preserve the personality of the original home. In the case of such an old house, she said, “you’re not really an owner as much as a steward.”

She and her husband, who died in 2012, bought the house in 2004 for its location as much as its quirks. At the time, Furfaro was less than a fan of the house’s colors, mantels and English garden.

A restoration project, delayed by the 2008 recession, was completed in 2009. The renovation tacked on an addition with a new kitchen, a den and a primary bedroom suite, and it transformed second-floor storage



PHOTOS BY LAURENE MORTON/COMPASS REALTY

space into a walk-in closet.

The exterior of the addition includes unpainted brick, in keeping with the requirements of Alexandria’s Board of Architectural Review.

As part of the restoration, a front door was crafted from a piece of wormy 19th-century chestnut without the use of glue, relying, instead, on pegs to hold

SEE FLOUNDER ON 17

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The kitchen has an island with three preparation areas: a white marble block for making pastries and pasta, a maple and walnut butcher’s block and a slate area for fruit and vegetable preparation. The term flounder house refers to the house’s distinct single-slope roof. The garden was designed to bloom year round, providing color in every season.



\$2,900,000

511 Queen St., Alexandria, Va.

Bedrooms/bathrooms: 3/3

Approximate square footage: 2,400

Lot size: 4,100 square feet

Features: This flounder house, one of the last remaining in Old Town, was built in the late 1700s and retains many original details. The house underwent several renovations in the last two decades, including the construction of a sizable addition in 2009. The driveway has two parking spaces.

Listing agent: Kay Blemker, Compass Realty

FLOUNDER FROM 16

it together. The solid brass knocker, in the shape of a dolphin, was made by a Venetian artisan from a mold dating to the Renaissance. The door is a nod to Furfaro's travels, her art history studies and the maritime trading history of Venice and Alexandria.

The older section of the house has original heart pine floors and five fireplaces — one in each original living space. On the first level, that space includes a living room, a dining room and a foyer. A breakfast nook connects those spaces to the addition.

Furfaro, a former chef and restaurateur, designed the kitchen with cooking in mind. She was inspired by British-style “unfitted” kitchens — with cabinets and appliances that aren't built-in — and by Spanish tiles in Seville. The distinctive kitchen island has three sections: a white marble block for making pastries and pasta, a maple and walnut butcher's block and a slate area for fruit and vegetable preparation. The two ends are kidney-shaped, an ergonomic decision intended to help Furfaro avoid running into hard corners.

Upstairs, the primary bed-



LAURENE MORTON/COMPASS REALTY

The house retains details that date to the late 1700s, such as original heart pine floors and fireplaces.

room suite has a Venetian chandelier from the 1930s and a hand-forged iron knocker from the early 1800s on a door that opens to a Juliet balcony.

The en suite bathroom, which was featured in a local design magazine in 2009, was inspired by memories of fog rolling over the hills around Furfaro's former San Francisco home — with gray, green and white tones surrounding the stainless-steel Japanese soaking tub. A glass-tiled shower has a rain shower head, and on the wall above the tub, there is a niche designed specifically to display a statue of a racehorse, an ornament that Furfaro purchased in Old Town. The suite has a walk-in closet with a washer and a dryer.

Another bedroom has an en suite bathroom, a fireplace and direct access to a sunroom. The third bedroom has a fireplace.

The garden was designed for year-round color: peonies, irises and cherry blossoms in the spring, gardenia and English rose blooms in the summer, the foliage of Japanese maples in the fall, and daphne and Sasanqua Camellia trees in the winter. The driveway has two parking spaces.

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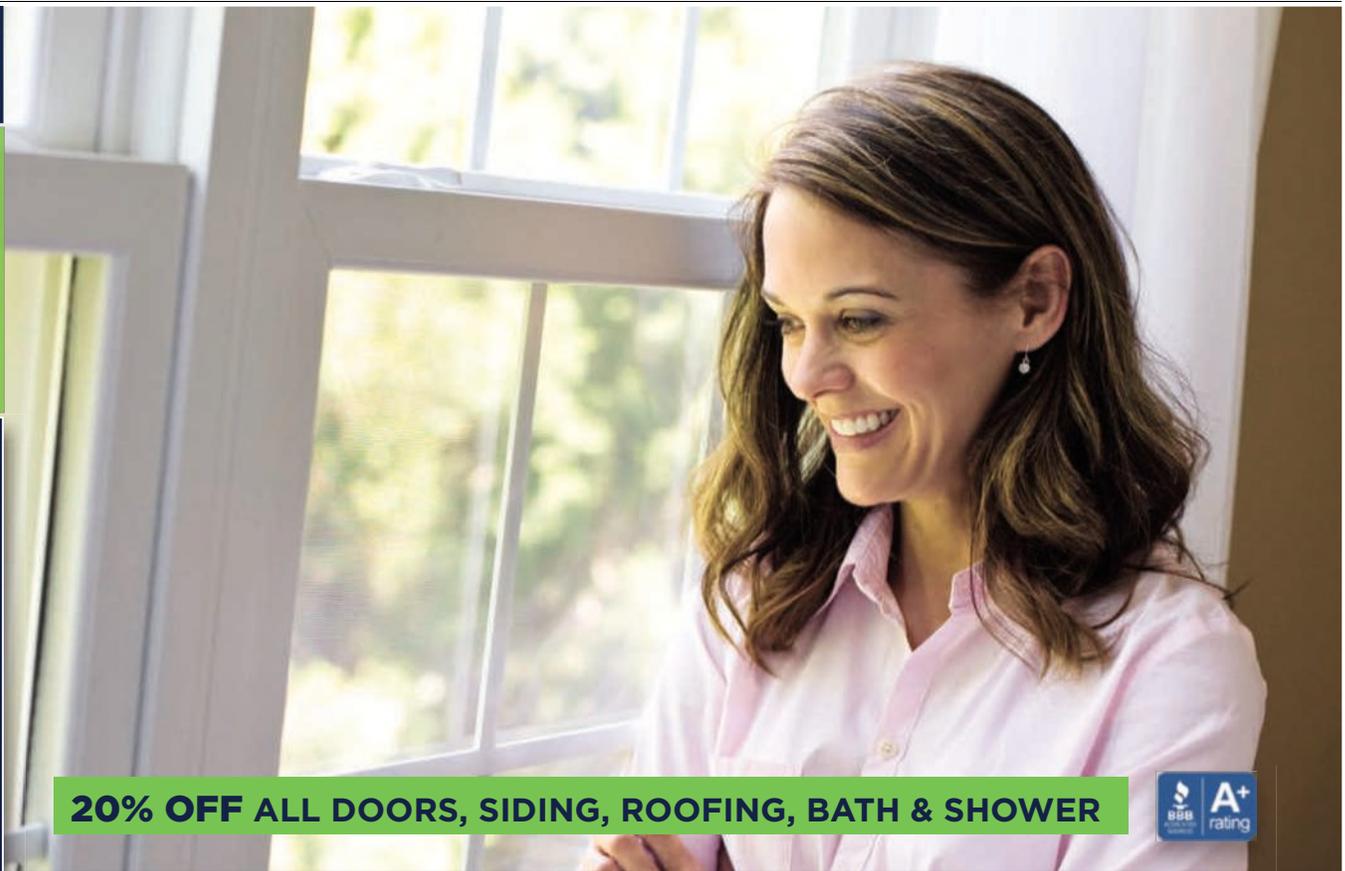
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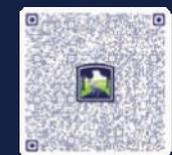
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WHERE WE LIVE: BEVERLY BEACH IN MARYLAND

This town has plenty of water views

The former weekend resort is popular with commuters

BY DEBBIE FUNK

Beverly Beach, Md., residents can count the days by the sun rising and setting over the waterways that border the Anne Arundel County community.

The Mayo Peninsula neighborhood, 13 miles south of Annapolis, is tucked between the Chesapeake Bay, the Rhode River and Beverly Triton Nature Park, a 350-acre waterfront park.

"I call it the edge of the Earth," said Carrie Bothmer, who moved to the unincorporated community nearly 20 years ago. "I can't imagine ever leaving."

Many residents commute 38 miles to Baltimore or 35 to D.C., Bothmer said, but enjoy the tranquility of living in Beverly Beach. "It's a place to hide from all the hustle and bustle," she said.

Before the Chesapeake Bay Bridge opened in 1952, Beverly Beach was one of three beaches on the Mayo Peninsula that drew Baltimore and D.C. residents on weekends to swim, boat and fish.

Baltimore native Edgar S. Kalb established a cottage community, then spelled Beverley Beach, around 1925 and about 20 years later bought the neighboring beach and named it Triton Beach, offering it as a day resort.

The original cottages had stucco walls, tongue-and-groove bead board and exposed ceilings — primitive, but strong, said resident Greg Hurley, who remembers Beverly Beach from his childhood in the late 1950s. They had free access to the beach resort, according to "Images of America, Chesapeake's Western Shore Vintage Vacationland," by Lara L. Lutz.

The resort had concession stands, slot machines, coin-operated rides, bingo games and dance bands, according to "The History of Mayo, Maryland" by Caroline L. Britt Mullins.

"You could put me in the middle of that pavilion and I could tell you where everything was," Hurley said.

Those attractions are long



PHOTOS BY CARA TAYLOR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



gone. Today, the neighborhood is an eclectic mix of about 400 houses. Most original cottages have been renovated, razed or enlarged.

A former lifeguard bunkhouse has been converted to a four-unit dwelling — rare for Beverly Beach where most houses are single family.

"You have your beach bungalows, your million-dollar homes," Bothmer said. "It's a little bit of everything here."

Over the last 12 months, nine houses sold in Beverly Beach, with an average sale price of \$460,000. The lowest was \$315,000, for a 970-square-foot two-bedroom, one-bathroom house. The highest was \$779,000 for a 2,861-square-foot four-bedroom, three-bath house, said real estate agent J.J. Fegan, an associate broker with RE/MAX Executive.

A few houses are on the water. But one desirable feature of Beverly Beach is that a homeowner can have water views and water access without paying the higher taxes of a waterfront house, Fegan said.

Neighboring Beverly Triton Nature Park has a beach, three saltwater ponds for crabbing and fishing, and hiking and biking trails. Beverly Beach residents can access it directly from their neighborhood.

The community maintains a private marina on Cadle Creek, but Beverly Triton Park is the only

ABOVE: A house in the unincorporated community of Beverly Beach, which has about 400 houses. Most of the original cottages have been replaced or renovated. LEFT: Beachgoers sit under beach umbrellas on a hot June day at Mayo Beach.

sandy beach.

Sandy Lofgren-Sargent, a real estate agent and lifelong Edgewater resident, has cherished memories of Beverly Beach. Her family had a bloodworm business, and as a youngster she would make early deliveries to the general store on Central Avenue that served the three beaches in the area.

In 2021, she bought and renovated the 1926 Beverly Beach lifeguard bunkhouse into rental units.

"I have this passion for things that are old," said Lofgren-Sargent, owner of Lofgren-Sargent Real Estate. "I like to see them loved properly."

Hurley, who bought his parents' Beverly Beach home in 1974 and added a second story, recalled his childhood in the community, including playing with the Black children whose grandmother lived nearby on land her family had owned since the 1800s. One day, when Hurley's brother suggested that they go to

SEE BEVERLY ON 19



PHOTOS BY CARA TAYLOR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

A boat hovers above the water on a private dock in Beverly Beach. The town has long been a draw for visitors from Baltimore and D.C. to swim, boat and fish.

BEVERLY FROM 18

the beach, their friend said, “No, we can’t go down there.”

“I thought it was because he wasn’t allowed to go that far,” Hurley said.

The real reason was Kalb did not allow Black or Jewish people to purchase cottages or use the beach, according to the county’s “Guide to African American Heritage and Culture in the Four River

Heritage Area.” The guide shows a sign that was posted at the front of the beach club that said, “Membership Limited To Gentiles Only.”

In 1968, Kalb closed the resort rather than comply with a federal order to integrate, the same year a state law banned slot machines, the heritage guide said.

Several years later Kalb sold the property to a developer who planned to build high rises. But

Beverly Beach residents and other groups opposed the plan and dug in for a fight. In 1984, Anne Arundel County bought the land for what would become Beverly Triton Nature Park.

Residents worked with the county to minimize park traffic in their neighborhood. People who don’t live in Beverly Beach must reach the park only through an entrance on Triton Beach Road.

“They don’t want [their neigh-

borhood] to be exploited or to disturb the nature of what they have there,” Sargent said. “If you live there, you love it.”

They also want to help each other, Bothmer said.

When storms knock out power, residents with generators run cords to plug in their neighbors’ refrigerators and lights. When rising waters are a threat, sandbags are distributed to help prevent flooding, Bothmer said.

“I may not know the names of all of my neighbors, but I guarantee you, if something happens — a hurricane, a power outage — everyone works together,” Bothmer said.

Schools: Mayo Elementary, Central Middle, South River High School.

Transit: The Davidsonville Park & Ride, with commuter bus service to D.C., is just under 12 miles away on Route 424.



FROM LEFT: Sailboats glide across the Chesapeake Bay off the community. Mark Kramer, owner of Kramer and Sons Overhead Door Service, has lived in Beverly Beach for nearly 40 years. Jacob Grisso, a park ranger for Anne Arundel County, grabs lunch from Lou’s Stop Shop, a family-owned convenience store.



ILLUSTRATION BY MARÍA ALCONADA BROOKS/THE WASHINGTON POST; ISTOCK

ON PARENTING

How do we start having family meetings with our 8-year-old?

BY MEGHAN LEAHY

Dear Meghan: I would like to start having family meetings, like you've mentioned in your columns, to get us talking and connecting. We're a family of three, and my son is 8 years old. Can you provide a guide on how to conduct the meetings, how often to have them and what we should discuss?

— Meeting

Meeting: I love this question, thank you for writing in! Family meetings are one of my favorite tools to teach parents because, yes, they help things move more smoothly in a family, and they are truly a tool of powerful connection. The book I like and recommend here is "The Family Meeting Handbook" by Katherine Foldes. It is highly readable, practical and unfussy, which is what every parent needs as they start a new technique.

One of the primary mistakes parents make is that they use the family meeting

to "get things done," and of course! There are chores and schedules and homework and camp dates, but if we jump over a child's basic need to feel heard, we will meet resistance ... and lots of it. Never forget: The family meeting is a means of connection.

The initial step of a family meeting is to announce that you are beginning a family meeting. This may feel obvious, but you need to treat it with a bit of formality to signal to everyone that this is something that your family is committed to. "We are beginning the Turner Family Meeting. This meeting is intended to _____, as well as make sure everyone is heard and seen. We will be running this meeting daily/weekly/monthly." Have a notebook for the notes of the meeting, but be ready for the first meeting to simply be this announcement. You can ask your child to contribute to setting the rules for the meeting. It may sound like, "no interrupting, one topic at a time and always end with fun." Make it your own.

I recommend you start every family meeting with an icebreaker and end every meeting with a little fun. A good icebreaker for an 8-year-old could be asking what everyone is interested in

these days. Yes, the parents are expected to also contribute because you are a part of the family. In our child-obsessed culture, it is good for your child to see that you are a real person with interests and a life. You can also assign the child to be "secretary" of the meeting and keep notes (or not). The moment of fun to end with can be strawberries and whipped cream, a game of Uno, a dance party — whatever you think would be easiest and most joyful for your family. The family meeting is meant to make your life easier, not harder, so don't complicate it.

When the skeleton of the family meeting feels secure (and for some families, this can take a long time and that is perfectly fine), then you can begin to add some more topics. For instance, chores. "So, Kendrick, there are about a million things that need to be done in this house to make it run smoothly, and part of being in a family is that we all pitch in. Let's work together to figure out how you can contribute"; and you begin the laborious and worthwhile back-and-forth until everyone in the family agrees to the plan. Of course, it would be easier to "tell" your son exactly what he is going to do and when, but I find that invites resistance and presupposes that your son

doesn't want to be useful (which humans do). Whatever you decide gets written down and revisited at the next family meeting, and everything you decide *will* change as your child and family mature.

Other topics for the family meeting include the schedule for the day/week/month, meal planning, homework, discussion of extracurricular activities, discussion of hard experiences (diagnoses, moves, etc.), topics for the adults and, lastly, planning fun. It may sound crazy, but fun is in short supply these days. Parents can be so busy raising their children that they can forget to actually enjoy them. The family meeting is a way to make sure that you plan your fun, whether it's a vacation away or ice pops.

With consistency, the family meeting can be the most powerful way to connect with your entire family, it can head off disagreements and it can allow (most) needs to be heard and met. It isn't a panacea, but it's pretty darn close. Remain committed to running them even when you fall off the wagon. Keep going, and good luck.

Send parenting questions to Leahy at onparenting@washpost.com.