

RAMSAY DE GIVE/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Anti-vaccine views harden in Texas

BY FENIT NIRAPPIL

SEMINOLE, TEXAS — When the local hospital warned of a brewing measles outbreak, Kaleigh Brantner urged fellow residents of this rural West Texas community to beware of vaccinating their children.

Two weeks later, her unvaccinated 7-year-old son came home from school with a fever. The telltale rash across his body followed. But his mild symptoms and swift recovery only hardened Brantner's anti-vaccination convictions, even after an unvaccinated child died of measles at a hospital 80 miles away.

"We're not going to harm our children or [risk] the potential to harm our children," she said, "so that we can save yours."

Texas's worst measles eruption in three decades has surged to 146 known cases, with the true toll likely much higher, exposing how under-vaccinated communities are unnecessarily vulnerable to one of the world's most contagious diseases, experts say. The first known victim was 6 and otherwise healthy, according to two individuals with knowledge of the case who

In West Texas, the death of a 6-year-old amid a surge of measles cases has spurred hundreds to immunize their children — while others have only grown more resistant

spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details that haven't been publicly released.

The life-threatening outbreak in West Texas starkly illustrates the stakes of slipping immunization rates and the ascension of vaccine skeptics, including Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr., to the highest levels of the public health establishment.

And it has revealed how fear and the scientifically false claims of the anti-vaccine movement have seeped into communities such as Gaines County, the epicenter of the outbreak, hardening attitudes about vaccines, pro and con, in the face of a

dangerous, preventable disease.

Brantner, 34, said she decided not to vaccinate her children after years of her own research and because, she said, her nephew had a severe reaction to the vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. She moved from New Mexico to Texas in part because it's easier here to claim an exception to school vaccine mandates.

"A cough, runny nose, fever and rash to a healthy child is mild but vaccine adverse reactions are severe!!!" she commented on Jan. 30 on the local hospital's Facebook post, which described measles symptoms.

Brantner's son Paxton recovered from measles with little problem, she said, after she fed him organic food and cod liver oil, bathed him in magnesium salts and rubbed him in beef tallow cream infused with lavender. The family took precautions to protect others in the community, such as ordering groceries for pickup and keeping their older son out of school. He developed a measles rash Friday.

Medical experts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say harm from

SEE MEASLES ON A16

DOGE layoffs at nuclear agency touch off crisis

SCRAMBLE TO FIND, REHIRE SAFETY CHIEFS

Agency oversees security of 5,000 U.S. warheads

BY EVAN HALPER
AND HANNAH NATANSON

Amid the tumult of mass firings, the Trump administration's dismissal of workers who maintain America's nuclear weapons delivered perhaps the greatest shock. These are people with highly sensitive jobs, the Energy Department would later acknowledge, who should have never been fired.

Almost all the workers were rehired in an embarrassing about-face, a prominent example of how the administration has had to reverse dismissals in multiple instances where its scatter-shot approach caused deeper damage to agencies than anticipated.

The employees of the National Nuclear Security Administration are stewards of a sprawling government system that keeps 5,000

nuclear warheads secure and ready. They make sure radiation doesn't leak, weapons don't mistakenly detonate and plutonium doesn't get into the wrong hands.

Yet late the night before Valentine's Day, the Trump administration perfunctorily fired 17 percent of the National Nuclear Security Administration's workforce, over the strenuous objections of senior nuclear officials.

"The president said workers critical to national security would be exempt from the firings. But then there was an active decision to say these positions are not critical to national security," said an official at the nuclear agency, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid reprisals. "It is so absurd I don't even know what to say."

The episode proved to be among the biggest blunders of

SEE DOGE ON A6

Entitlement programs pose big test for Trump

President tries to avoid political third rails as GOP eyes Medicaid cuts

BY DAN DIAMOND

President Donald Trump has insisted — loudly and repeatedly — that his administration won't cut Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

"I have said it so many times, you shouldn't be asking me that question," Trump told reporters Wednesday, invoking President George H.W. Bush's famous campaign promise in 1988 to not raise taxes. "This will not be 'read my

lips.' It won't be 'read my lips' anymore: We're not going to touch it."

Yet Bush ultimately broke his promise and raised taxes, and Trump may also find it difficult to keep his pledge not to touch the three entitlement programs that provide benefits to more than 130 million Americans.

Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid represent more than 40 percent of the federal budget — and a major focus of the Trump administration's operation to cut government spending, with billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk saying that the three programs represent major sources of waste, fraud and abuse. Republicans also concede that Medicaid, the

SEE BUDGET ON A4

World leaders rally around Zelensky

BY STEVE HENDRIX
AND MARIANA ALFARO

LONDON — Rattled European leaders on Sunday said they were "doubling down" on supporting Ukraine and boosting military aid following the televised Oval Office blowup between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The embattled Zelensky was greeted with cheers outside 10 Downing Street and a warm hug from British Prime Minister Keir Starmer when he arrived late Saturday for an emergency summit of European leaders. The

London summit boosts support for Ukraine after Oval Office blowup

pair embraced again at the start of the session Sunday, which Starmer described as a "once-in-a-generation moment" for European security, and they sat side-by-side during the talks.

The display of support stood in stark contrast with comments Sunday from Trump administration officials, who heaped blame

on Zelensky for the White House uproar. National security adviser Michael Waltz described Zelensky's behavior as "incredibly disrespectful," and Secretary of State Marco Rubio accused him of disrupting U.S. efforts to get Russian President Vladimir Putin to negotiate an end to the war.

The London gathering, which included the leaders of Germany, France, Canada and other nations, did not produce a formal statement. But participants

SEE EUROPE ON A11

Russia reacts: Kremlin declares Trump "aligns with our vision." A11



KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

A proud winner

Zoe Saldania accepts the best supporting actress Oscar for "Emilia Pérez" during the 97th Academy Awards in Hollywood on Sunday. See our coverage on C1 and C2 and at [washingtonpost.com/style](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style).

Three bald eagle eggs might be the charm

Calif. nest cam is eagerly watched for signs of life after heartbreak in 2024

BY ANGIE ORELLANA
HERNANDEZ

Jackie the bald eagle sensed it was time to give up even as her mate, Shadow, still held out hope.

The avian couple were entering a second year in a row without chicks. Jackie called out to Shadow urging him to let go as

he sat on their eggs for an extra three days in an apparent state of disbelief.

"He couldn't leave them alone," said Sandy Steers, a biologist and executive director of Friends of Big Bear Valley, a nonprofit that works in California's San Bernardino National Forest. "He had to sit."

Last year's heartbreaking

scene played across the United States as admirers of Jackie and Shadow tuned in daily to the live nest camera, waiting to see if the celebrity bald eagles' fortune would turn around. This year, it just might.

On Jan. 29, Friends of Big Bear Valley announced that Jackie had laid three eggs — a rare

SEE EGGS ON A7

IN THE NEWS

Israel blocks aid The nation said that it had stopped all assistance from entering the Gaza Strip, a move that threatened to plunge the territory back into a brutal war. A10

Ice rinks dwindling Minnesota officials say climate change is forcing them to reassess a cherished winter tradition. A8

THE NATION
The Education Department softened its stance on a policy proposal that said even race-neutral policies aimed at diversity could result in schools and universities losing federal funding. A2

A Trump order made English the nation's official language. A3
Current and former National Weather Service staffers said firings will harm the monitoring and prediction of weather hazards. A5

THE ECONOMY
The app Beeper can bring a measure of tidiness to your digital communications, Shira Ovide writes. A13

THE REGION
Jurisdictions across Northern Virginia are facing tough choices and much uncertainty this budget season. B1

A memorial performance at Capital One Arena in D.C. honored the skaters who died in January's aerial collision over the Potomac. B1
Maryland lawmakers have renewed a debate over charging juveniles as adults as they weigh a bill that aims to reduce such cases. B1

STYLE
At Strathmore, pianist Brian Ganz reached the penultimate chapter in his quest to perform the complete works of Chopin. C1
Many of the most memorable "MTV Unplugged" performances are now streaming on Paramount Plus. C4

BUSINESS NEWS.....A13
COMICS.....C7
OBITUARIES.....B4
OPINION PAGES.....A14
TELEVISION.....C6
WORLD NEWS.....A10

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The Washington Post
Year 148, No. 54144



Education Department softens controversial guidance on race and schools

Changes come after letter to school officials caused nationwide panic

BY LAURA MECKLER

The Education Department is retreating from some of the most incendiary suggestions it made last month in a sweeping directive threatening to pull federal funding from any college or K-12 school district that considers race in hiring, programming, scholarships and virtually every other aspect of student and campus life.

A new question-and-answer document, posted online late Friday, clearly states that by law the federal government cannot dictate curriculum. It also notes that cultural celebrations and events celebrating Black History Month are legally permitted as long as they are open to people of all races.

It also narrows the definition of which types of diversity, equity and inclusion programs might draw scrutiny. The new directive adheres more closely to traditional court doctrines and interpretation of civil rights law, experts said Saturday.

“I see it as a significant retrenchment back towards more established case law,” said Ray Li, an attorney who worked on these issues in the Office for Civil Rights during the Biden administration. “It reads as if written by someone different.”

“A lot of the most unsupported claims made” in the original letter, he said, “have been walked back.”

The original guidance suggested, for instance, that teaching that the United States was built upon “systemic and structural racism” would be unlawful. A lawsuit challenging the directive questioned how any school could teach a complete history without including examples of systemic racism such as slavery, Jim Crow segregation laws and the incarceration camps Japanese Americans were sent to during World War II.

“It’s certainly better supported by law and more neutral in tone” than the original letter, agreed Jon Fansmith, senior vice president of government relations at the American Council on Education, a lobbying group for colleges and universities.

Since taking office, President Donald Trump and his administration have signaled an eagerness to investigate school districts and colleges that are out of step with conservative legal theories

and his priorities regarding how schools handle questions of race and gender.

Last month, the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights sent a “Dear Colleague” letter to school officials threatening to pull federal funding from any school or college that considers race in hiring, discipline policy, scholarships, prizes or any other aspect of campus life. It gave schools a two-week deadline to comply, setting off confusion and panic on campuses nationwide.

Then, on Thursday, the department opened a new portal for people to report instances of discrimination for the agency to investigate.

“The U.S. Department of Education is committed to ensuring all students have access to meaningful learning free of divisive ideologies and indoctrination,” reads the new webpage, dubbed “End DEI.”

But late Friday, the new document softened the agency’s stance on what exactly could get schools into trouble.

Both the original letter and the new document emphasize that the Trump administration will not stand for racial discrimination, which, on its face, is not a controversial statement. For decades, federal law has barred federal

dollars for schools that discriminate on the basis of race.

In the past, the department has focused on discrimination faced by people of color who have historically been subjected to bias and inferior treatment. By contrast, the Trump missives focus more on the diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives created to address and remedy that history. In fact, the administration argues, DEI does the opposite.

On Tuesday, the American Federation of Teachers, its Maryland affiliate and the American Sociological Association asked a federal court to ban enforcement of the Trump guidance. The lawsuit called the document an unconstitutional infringement on free speech and argued it was unconstitutionally vague — not defining, for instance, which practices are banned.

In its new document, the department attempts to clarify what it meant when it suggested practices or even lessons based on the idea that the United States is built on systemic racism are illegal. The department said its enforcement policies will not infringe on teachers’ First Amendment rights to free speech and notes that federal law bars the department from “exercising control over the content of school curricula.”

It offers some examples of what would not be allowed, including some of the most controversial DEI programming.

For instance, it says a racially hostile environment might be present if an elementary school sponsored programming “acts to shame students of a particular race or ethnicity, accuse them of being oppressors in a racial hierarchy, ascribe to them less value as contributors to class discussions because of their race, or deliberately assign them intrinsic guilt based on the actions of their presumed ancestors or relatives in other areas of the world.”

It added, though, that “similar themes in a class discussion at a university would be less likely to create a racially hostile environment.”

At colleges, it says “more extreme practices” could violate the law, such as segregating students for discussions with guest speakers, pressuring students to take certain positions on racially charged issues, mandating courses or trainings that “are designed to emphasize and focus on racial stereotypes,” or assigning different coursework based on race.

University officials say those situations are rare. But a union attorney critical of the document said it was still unclear whether,

say, a mandatory course on multiculturalism that teaches about bias and structural racism would be allowed.

The original guidance was also criticized for stating that “race-neutral” policies — those that do not involve considering race — are illegal if the end goal is to increase diversity. It cited a college that eliminated standardized testing, which the letter said would be “unlawful” if the goal was “to achieve a desired racial balance or to increase racial diversity.”

Many school districts and colleges have adopted race-neutral policies whose results are aimed at diversity — for instance, increased recruitment in areas with more students of color, or new admission requirements to diversify competitive magnet programs.

In the new document, discussion of such policies is much more narrow and follows well-established precedent, which holds that a race-neutral policy is not allowable if it has a discriminatory intent, Li said.

He said that it’s still possible that the department will open cases that seek to push this issue, but that the guidance document makes clear they will use the established framework for analyzing whether policies are legal.

The Washington Post

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TO REACH THE OPINION PAGES
Letters to the editor: letters@washpost.com or call 202-334-9876
Opinion: oped@washpost.com

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

CORRECTIONS

- A Feb. 24 Style section article about CBS’s new soap opera “Beyond the Gates” misspelled actress Tamara Tunie’s first name.
- A map included in a Feb. 23 special section titled “Africa’s Belt of Turmoil” mislabeled two countries. A country identified as Benin should have been labeled Togo, and a country identified as Ghana should have been labeled Benin.

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POLITICS & THE NATION

Colleges freeze hiring, cut costs amid funding uncertainty

Universities say cuts in NIH support threaten their research mission

BY SUSAN SVRLUGA

Some universities are freezing hiring, admitting fewer graduate students and warning that recent federal changes and proposals pose an existential threat to higher education.

A U.S. judge last month put a temporary block on Trump administration orders for deep cuts to federal funding rates that the National Institutes of Health provides to support overhead costs for research at academic institutions. But the uncertainty around that and other potential federal actions has already prompted some university officials to scramble contingency plans and incise budgets where they can, in ways that could have a lasting impact on scientific research in this country.

“We talk a lot about being in this intense competition with China for technology and science,” said L. Rafael Reif, president emeritus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “Is this a way in which we can compete? This is a very difficult time to create such a mess.”

Last month, NIH announced it would save \$4 billion per year by immediately and drastically cutting the rates for the facilities and administrative costs of biomedical research, the indirect costs that universities spend on things such as utilities in labs, safety and compliance with government regulations. “The United States should have the best medical research in the world,” NIH said in its announcement. “It is accordingly vital to ensure that as many funds as possible go towards direct scientific research costs rather than administrative overhead.”

Critics see taxpayer dollars wasted on administrative bloat. And the government argued in a response to legal challenges that the new policy will not change NIH’s total grant spending, but will reallocate the spending “away from indirect costs and toward the direct funding of research.” But researchers and scientists say indirect costs cover essential infrastructure, such as heating and cooling to keep delicate lab experiments at the right temperature, collective costs for hazardous waste disposal and



ELIJAH NOUVELAGE/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Officials at Morehouse College in Atlanta say that they may need to lay off staff and cut salaries if proposed NIH funding cuts go through.

personnel. University leaders say that the indirect rates are carefully negotiated and audited reimbursement essential to research — and that the decision would devastate efforts that lead to lifesaving discoveries and innovations that power the economy.

Filling budget gaps

Coalitions of university leaders, hospitals, Democratic attorneys general and others quickly filed lawsuits to stop the cuts. But that’s just one of the places where federal funding could be slashed. And some lawmakers have already warned they will try to increase taxes on university endowments.

In the meantime, the cycles of academic life go on, and university officials are having to make decisions without knowing whether they will soon have gaping budget shortfalls.

With its announcement, NIH posted a message on X spotlighting indirect cost rates in the 60-70 percent range for research at three elite universities: Harvard, Yale and Johns Hopkins. But the proposal would cap the rate at 15 percent for all institu-

tions, not just well-known universities with large endowments. Schools in both red and blue states, public and private, would take a hit.

In court documents challenging NIH rate cuts, university leaders forecast stark consequences if they were implemented: At Morehouse College in Atlanta, the medical school’s president and chief executive said in court documents that if the cuts go through, it would need to lay off 66 research and clinical staff members, cut salaries 2 percent across the school, freeze hiring and consider rescinding offers made to new faculty. Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston said the cuts would force it to terminate leases for labs and lay off hundreds of employees. Tulane University in New Orleans predicted cuts to faculty, postdoctoral researchers and staff. The University of Pittsburgh said the rate cut would amount to a loss of reimbursement this year of \$168 million, perhaps halting clinical trials — which, if interrupted, could jeopardize scientific discoveries and patients’

lives.

A consultant estimated in court documents that the total impact of the rate cuts for research institutions nationwide, based on 2024 data, was \$6.5 billion.

On Wednesday, Stanford University’s president and provost announced a freeze in staff hiring — a decision that does not apply to faculty and student workers — citing uncertainties over federal policy proposals.

MIT instituted a hiring freeze on most nonfaculty positions last month, a spokeswoman said, driven by the uncertain outlook for federal funding and policy.

On Feb. 24, J. Larry Jameson, a physician-scientist who is the interim president of the University of Pennsylvania, told the campus community that the school was “modeling different financial scenarios and actions that may need to be implemented, and we are working closely with school and center leaders to seek input and ideas around possible cost containment measures and new sources of revenue.”

The university could lose \$240 million annually if the indi-

rect rate cuts go through.

Jameson said recent and possible federal actions “represent an existential threat across our University and American higher education.”

Shrinking staff, grad student admissions

Some faculty members at schools across the country are already seeing the impact of the uncertainty firsthand.

At the University of California at San Diego, Kimberly Cooper, a professor of cell and developmental biology, said she and colleagues were midway through interviews for a faculty position when they learned of a hiring pause. They had to tell a candidate in the midst of two days on campus that the position was no longer available — as well as those who had already visited — and cancel the travel plans for those who had not yet come.

This is the time of year when graduate admissions decisions are being made, and some schools or individual departments are pausing or limiting the number of offers they make for doctoral degree candidates, or

informing applicants that those offers are conditional only.

Annika Barber expected to offer at least two first-year graduate students a place in her biology lab at Rutgers University this spring. But now she doesn’t know whether she will have funding for them, unsure of what will happen to federal support for biomedical research. And she has heard from many students that they were told by other labs that they did not know if they would have funding, either.

“It’s going to be so hard to get into a biomedical doctoral program this year,” Barber said, “because — whether the program says so or not — they’re admitting fewer students.” Students are panicking about whether they are going to get in anywhere, she said, and those about to graduate have started to question whether they can have a viable career in academia.

Barber is worried about her future, too. She started her lab, which investigates the biological basis of complex behaviors by studying decision-making in flies, in 2020. And like other young colleagues, she’s trying to recruit graduate students to it.

“We need doctoral students and funding to get tenure,” she said. New labs are in a particularly precarious spot at a time of so much uncertainty. “I like to think that we baby professors are the future of science: We’re the ones who are hopefully still going to be here in 20 and 30 years moving things forward. But we don’t have a lot of cushion.”

At UC-San Diego, Cooper said the School of Biological Sciences and graduate program leadership typically admits 25 applicants for the doctoral program but decided this year it needed to cut that to 17.

The reduction hurts the school’s labs and the classrooms where they serve as teaching assistants, as well as the undergraduates whom they would be mentoring, she said, but it goes beyond that: These are students who might go on to postdoctoral work and academic careers after they graduate, or they might go to work for companies making medical devices or law firms specializing in intellectual property.

“A lot of the U.S. economy is based on scientific discoveries, and the strength of our economy now is based on past discoveries,” Cooper said. “If we stop investing in those discoveries, the long-term effects on the economy are going to be crushing.”

What does designating English as the country’s official language mean?

BY VIVIAN HO AND RACHEL PANNETT

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Saturday making English the official language of the United States — the first time in the country’s history that it will have a federally recognized national language.

Here’s what to know.

What will the executive order do?

Beyond designating English as the country’s official language, the order rescinds a federal mandate issued in 2000 by President Bill Clinton that required agencies and recipients of federal funding to provide extensive language assistance to non-English speakers. Trump’s order lets agency heads decide whether to keep offering documents and services in other languages.

It also encourages new Americans to speak English, saying this “not only opens doors economically, but it helps newcomers engage in their communities, participate in national traditions, and give back to our society.”

“This order recognizes and celebrates the long tradition of multilingual American citizens who have learned English and passed it to their children for generations to come,” the White House said.

What does having an official language mean?

An official language is the language used by the government to “conduct official, day-to-day business,” according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. While codifying an official language can help “define the character of the state and the cultural identity of the people within it,” the institute warns that doing so may “place a particular group of people in a position of power” and exclude those whose languages are not

recognized.

“The choice of an official language or languages has deep symbolic implications for the state’s cultural identity,” the institute adds.

More than 30 states have designated English as the official language. They include California, Colorado, Alabama, Florida and Tennessee. Hawaii has English and Hawaiian as official languages, while Alaska has several Native languages, as well as English, listed in its 21 official languages.

Why is Trump arguing for an official language?

The White House says the executive order will help foster “national cohesion” and establish “efficiency in government operations.”

Trump and his allies have also long tied the issue of an official language to immigration. More than 350 languages are spoken in the United States, according to federal data, but Trump repeatedly voiced concerns while campaigning about migrants coming into the country speaking foreign languages.

On the campaign trail for the 2016 election, Trump criticized former Florida governor Jeb Bush — who was running in the Republican presidential primary at the time — for speaking Spanish while campaigning. When asked about his remarks, Trump said, “This is a country where we speak English, not Spanish.”

The Trump administration removed the Spanish-language version of the official White House website within hours of his inauguration in January.

However, Republican groups have, in recent years, invested in Spanish-language messaging, and Trump ran Spanish-language ads during the 2020 and 2024 election cycles.

Immigration and voting rights advocacy groups are speaking out against the executive order. Ana-



SETH WENIG/AP

More than 350 languages are spoken in the United States, according to federal data. The U.S. Census Bureau found that almost 68 million people spoke another language besides English at home in 2019.

bel Mendoza, the communications director for the immigration advocacy nonprofit group United We Dream, said in a statement that Trump was putting “a target on the backs of Black and brown immigrants and communities who speak different languages and we won’t tolerate it.”

“Trump will try to use this executive order as a crutch to attack schools providing curriculum to immigrant students in other languages, gut programs and roles that help to promote inclusive language access, and embolden immigration agents to single out and harass individuals who speak a certain way,” she said.

How widely is English spoken in the United States?

The U.S. Census Bureau’s

American Community Survey data from 2018 to 2022 determined that 78.3 percent of people in the nation age 5 and older reported speaking only English at home.

ACS data also found that almost 68 million people spoke another language besides English at home in 2019. Some of the most widespread languages spoken in the United States are Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Arabic.

However, ACS data found that just 8.4 percent of people living in the United States report speaking English “less than ‘very well.’”

There were significant variations in English-proficiency levels among the people who spoke a language other than English at home, the ACS found. For exam-

ple, 52 percent of people who spoke Chinese at home spoke English “less than very well,” but the number fell to 39 percent among those who spoke Spanish at home, and 30 percent for those who spoke Tagalog at home, the ACS said.

The numbers may reflect “a recent increase in immigration from Asia and newcomers who have not had enough time to assimilate and master English yet,” the ACS added.

Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-New York), who is set to deliver the Spanish-language response to Trump’s joint address to Congress on Tuesday, suggested at a news conference Friday that the order would undercut the country’s global competitiveness.

“It’s mind-boggling if the intent is to suppress the ability of

our young people to be proficient in other languages,” Espaillat said. “I think that that doesn’t make us competitive as a country.”

How many other countries have official languages?

An estimated 170 countries have one or more official language, according to the Associated Press. Britain, the birthplace of the English language, does not have an official language.

The Mexican constitution does not designate an official language — although Spanish is widely spoken and used for government affairs, Mexico is home to dozens of Indigenous languages.

Meanwhile, Canada has legislation designating English and French as official languages, to “ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges” and protect the development of “English and French linguistic minority communities.”

What about Puerto Rico?

While the White House didn’t detail how an official language would affect territories such as Puerto Rico, where Spanish and English are official languages and most government affairs are conducted in Spanish, Rep. Pablo José Hernández said, Puerto Rico’s nonvoting member of Congress, said in a statement on X that the order “reflects a vision of American identity that conflicts with our Puerto Rican identity.”

“There will be no statehood without assimilation, and Puerto Ricans will never surrender our identity,” Hernández said. “For those of us who seek a union with the U.S. without assimilation, and U.S. citizenship with more autonomy, there is only one alternative: maintaining and strengthening the current Commonwealth relationship.”

Maegan Vazquez contributed to this report.

Clemency advocates laud Trump’s ‘pardon czar’ pick

Johnson’s life sentence was commuted by the president in 2018

BY KIM BELLWARE

As a president known for governing on whims and holding mercurial — often hypocritical — beliefs, Donald Trump advances few policies that are as loaded with contradictions as criminal justice. Trump, whose “tough on crime” stances include aggressive use of the death penalty and expanding “stop and frisk” tactics, signed in his first term the bipartisan First Step Act, which eased sentences.

But Trump’s often unpredictable policy moves most recently drew plaudits from advocates for prisoners and criminal defendants who warmly received the president’s announcement last month that he would tap someone from their orbit, Alice Marie Johnson, as his “pardon czar.”

“Alice was in prison for doing something that today probably wouldn’t even be prosecuted,” Trump said during the Feb. 20

event. “You’ve been an inspiration to people, and we’re going to be listening to your recommendation on pardons,” he said to Johnson. “You’re going to find people just like you.”

Johnson, who did not return calls for an interview, has remained in contact with Trump since he commuted her life sentence for federal drug and money laundering charges in 2018, granting her a full pardon two years later. She was featured in a 2020 Trump campaign Super Bowl ad touting his support of second chances for those with criminal convictions. That same year, Johnson submitted more than 100 clemency petitions to Trump, she said in a recent interview with her hometown Action News 5 channel in Memphis.

Now 69, Johnson has worked as an advocate for other prisoners since her release and founded the Memphis-based nonprofit Taking Action for Good, which advocates for clemency and compassionate release on prisoners’ behalf.

Civil rights and harm-reduction advocates said Johnson is a welcome choice, given her experience in advocacy as someone who spent nearly 22 years in prison for a first-time offense.

“We definitely see this as an exciting opportunity to see someone with lived experience shaping criminal-justice-reform policy,” said Daniel Landsman, the vice president of policy for Families Against Mandatory Minimums.

Landsman said that, years ago, someone with Johnson’s background would have been an unlikely choice for such a role. He also said Trump’s elevation of a person who has experienced the prison system is “a very good sign” that there is potential for more criminal justice reform during this administration. At the same time, the administration’s full position on that issue is “still taking shape,” Landsman said.

Lisa Monet Wayne, executive director of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, similarly lauded Johnson’s selection, noting that the group recognized Johnson in 2020 with its Champion of Justice Community Advocacy Award.

“This appointment holds exciting possibilities for a more equitable clemency process, driven by Ms. Johnson’s firsthand experience and deep understanding of the system’s flaws,” Wayne wrote in a message. “However, it’s im-

portant to acknowledge the limitations of this role. While she can undoubtedly influence and advocate, the ultimate power to grant clemency remains with the president.”

It is unclear exactly what powers Johnson will have in the role of “czar” and whether she will work in conjunction with the Office of the Pardon Attorney — or without it, as Trump largely did in his first term.

“Czar” itself is just a term of art — it’s not anything in the Constitution or law, and it’s not defined in federal regulatory statutes,” said Mitchel Sollenberger, a political science professor at the University of Michigan at Dearborn who studies the branches of American government and co-wrote “The President’s Czars: Undermining Congress and the Constitution.”

Sollenberger divides these roles into two camps: One he calls the “media-labeled czar” — someone in an actual Senate-confirmed role, like President Barack Obama’s onetime deputy interior secretary, David Hayes, who was dubbed in some media as the “California water czar.” The other is an “actual” czar.

“The actual ones are executive-

branch officials who aren’t confirmed by the Senate but work in the White House and exercise some kind of final decision-making authority: financials, developing rules and regulations, issuing orders,” Sollenberger said. “Elon Musk’s position is that way in many regards.”

Johnson’s role could be more supplemental to the Pardon Attorney’s Office — “maybe looking at these more marginal cases with a different set of eyes,” he said.

The robust authority of the presidential pardon gives the commander in chief “the constitutional power to pardon basically any federal crime, from mutilating the currency to treason,” said Jeffrey Crouch, an assistant professor of American politics at American University and author of “The Presidential Pardon Power.”

Traditionally, presidents have granted pardons to show mercy to individuals or for the good of society, Crouch said.

“A striking difference between traditional and modern clemency practices is the rising number of clemency grants awarded by recent presidents of both political parties to serve their own personal interests,” he said.

Presidents since George H.W. Bush granted pardons to associates, family members and political supporters, as Trump did most recently with those convicted in the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Compared to other presidents, Crouch said, Trump’s total number of clemency grants is not an outlier.

“What *is* unusual is how many people with some connection to Trump received clemency,” he said. Crouch noted that in his first term, Trump’s picks for pardons often came from something he would see on TV, or a recommendation by someone who had access to him.

In Johnson’s case, celebrity businesswoman Kim Kardashian lobbied Trump on her behalf.

Johnson, in an interview with Fox News last month, said she will focus on ensuring “safety in the communities” when making pardon recommendations and that she wants to make sure those recommended for clemency have family or community support upon reentry.

“I don’t want to help people come home and then at the same time they’re set up for failure,” Johnson said.

House vote previews tensions over budget fight as GOP eyes cuts to Medicaid

BUDGET FROM A1

safety-net health program that provides coverage to more than 70 million lower-income Americans, is likely to face the brunt of potential cuts under a House budget resolution that passed last week and instructs GOP lawmakers to find \$880 billion in federal savings.

But Trump officials across the administration have been instructed to avoid any perception of actions cutting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, according to two people who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal conversations.

“I can only tell you what President Trump has told me, which is that he wants me to make Medicaid, Medicare and Obamacare better,” Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Trump’s pick to lead the nation’s health agencies, told a Senate panel in January in response to repeated questions about congressional Republicans’ potential efforts to cut Medicaid.

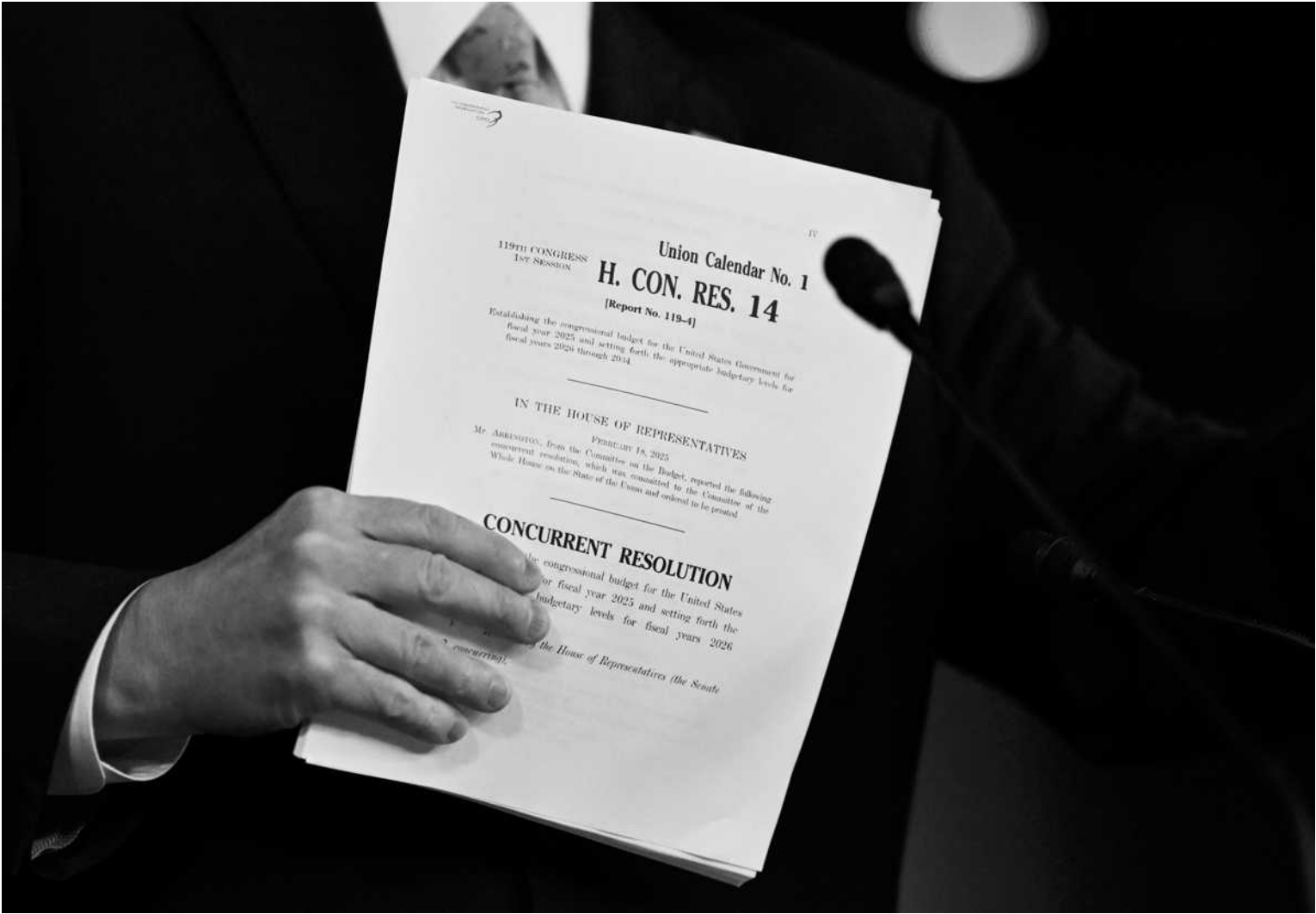
The coming budget and legislative fights are shaping up as a test: Do the programs remain a political third rail, as Republicans vividly remember from Trump’s first administration, when their failed attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act’s Medicaid expansion helped cost the GOP control of Congress? Or is there a path to cut programs that some watchdogs acknowledge are bloated by wasted spending without being punished by voters?

This past week provided a preview of those tensions, as some House Republicans publicly agonized before deciding to vote for their party’s budget plan, and GOP leaders assured them that they would protect Americans’ health coverage.

“We’re going to cut the fraud, waste and abuse out of Medicaid, and that’s where we’re going to get part of the savings to accomplish this mission,” House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana) said Wednesday night on CNN.

Some Republicans and Trump allies, such as former White House strategist Stephen K. Bannon, have urged the GOP to tread carefully as they weigh changes to Medicaid specifically, warning that any cuts could harm Trump’s own low-income voters. Concerns about cutting health programs also extend to the ACA, long demonized by Trump as the “failed Obamacare” program. A recent memo by Tony Fabrizio and Bob Ward, who conducted polling for Trump’s campaign, encouraged Republicans to extend tax credits for ACA health coverage that are set to expire this year.

“It is popular and it would be good politics for the House and Senate GOP to embrace it,” Fabrizio



House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-Louisiana) holds a copy of the budget resolution that the House approved last week.

rizio wrote in an email. Trump and GOP leaders previously have signaled that they do not plan to continue those tax credits.

Meanwhile, Democrats and advocacy groups have denounced House Republicans’ vote as a blow to health coverage and a bid to pay for the party’s planned tax cuts. Liberals quickly announced a flurry of new ads highlighting the risks to Medicaid and blasted supporters with emails warning that their health-care coverage was endangered.

“Republicans need to stop listening to Donald Trump and Elon Musk, who want tax breaks for their billionaire buddies, and start listening to their constituents, who just want to stay on their health care,” Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington) told reporters Thursday.

Surveys show that many Americans are wary of cutting Medicaid — or any entitlement program. While most Americans think that corruption, inefficiency and red tape are major government problems, according to an AP-NORC poll released in January, majorities also said that programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security need more funding, not less.

Americans are also roughly split on the work being done by Musk and his allies in the U.S.

DOGE Service. A February Washington Post-Ipsos poll found that 37 percent of Americans said Musk was cutting wasteful government spending, while 34 percent said he was cutting necessary government programs, and the remainder said they were unsure or had no response.

Trump, Musk and their allies have repeatedly framed their efforts as simple fraud-fighting, with the president and his billionaire adviser recently surfacing claims of widespread problems with Social Security payments for deceased Americans.

“When you see people that are 200 years old that are being sent checks for Social Security — some of them are actually being sent checks,” Trump said Wednesday. Analysts and watchdog groups have said that the problem is neither new nor a sign of widespread fraud, but a technological issue with Social Security’s tracking system and does not represent a source of significant spending.

Musk has further argued that Democrats are using overly generous entitlement programs to lure undocumented immigrants to the United States and shift the voting base.

“Why is the Democrat propaganda machine so fired up to destroy me?” Musk asked popular

podcaster Joe Rogan in an episode posted Friday. “The main reason is that ... entitlements fraud for illegal aliens is what is serving as a gigantic magnetic force to pull people in from all around the world and keep them here.”

Democrats have dismissed Musk’s claims, pointing to his past comments alleging a debunked link between illegal immigration and voting. Democrats also insist they are willing to consider changes to entitlement programs, but not as the GOP pushes ahead on a budget plan that they say is focused on lowering taxes for the party’s wealthy supporters.

“We need to look at how to make these programs work better, and I think there’s some good examples of that at the state level ... but what they’re talking about is not that,” said Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minnesota). “They’re looking to save money by reducing health insurance for people who really need it.”

Medicare and Social Security, which provide benefits to older Americans and are widely popular, generally have been insulated from political pressures. Democrats and Republicans have spent decades trading accusations about which party is cutting or defending those programs, mak-

ing it difficult to enact reforms or pursue wasteful spending.

But Medicaid, which serves low-income populations, traditionally has been more vulnerable to potential changes and cuts. The first Trump administration pursued work requirements in addition to funding changes that experts and advocates warned would curb enrollment and harm the program.

“Medicaid has never been considered a political third rail like Medicare and Social Security, but that’s starting to change,” Larry Levitt, executive vice president for health policy at KFF, a non-partisan health-care research group, wrote in a message. “Medicaid covers more people than Medicare and Social Security, and low-wage workers in Medicaid have become a prominent part of the Trump political base.”

Medicaid advocates say that political support for the program is stronger than at the start of the first Trump administration — with more enrollment and popular recognition in 2017, when the GOP embarked on its repeal bid — but that the program remains at risk.

“If Medicaid was a true third rail, I wouldn’t be doing so much work to explain the catastrophic consequences of these cuts,” said Anthony Wright, executive direc-

tor of Families USA, a nonpartisan health-care advocacy group. He predicted that Republicans would regret any attempt to scale back health-care coverage, citing how some voters have recently confronted their lawmakers with angry questions about Trump’s cuts to government programs. “I think the town hall responses are just the beginning,” Wright said.

Brian Blase, who served as a White House economic official in the first Trump administration, said efforts to overhaul Medicaid are being opposed by entrenched interests that benefit from spending on the program.

“The health-care industry doesn’t want to change anything. States don’t want to change anything,” said Blase, who now serves as president of Paragon Health Institute, a right-leaning think tank. He criticized “the proliferation of financing gimmicks,” such as taxing health-care providers to draw down additional Medicaid reimbursement — with the money going back to providers and also being used for unrelated state priorities — and other moves that have shifted costs for the program from the state to the federal government.

The White House has also bristled at any perception that health care is imperiled under the new administration, with officials dismissing recent coverage of a brief disruption to Medicaid payments and changes to how the National Institutes of Health funds biomedical research as “fake news.”

“The American people gave President Trump a mandate to improve health care for everyday Americans while streamlining government bloat,” Kush Desai, a White House spokesman, said in a statement. “The Trump administration is committed to protecting Medicaid while slashing the waste, fraud, and abuse within the program — reforms that will increase efficiency and improve care for beneficiaries.”

Blase said Republicans had learned from prior attempts to pursue health-care reforms, touting his own organization’s work.

“One of the benefits now, that we didn’t have in 2017, is Paragon putting out information on what’s going on with the Medicaid program,” said Blase, whose group has published several reports and commentaries widely cited by GOP lawmakers. A newsletter written by Blase on Wednesday highlighted “wasteful” Medicaid spending growth under the Biden administration and argued that the House’s budget efforts would largely reverse that. Another recent newsletter urged lawmakers not to back away from the coming health-care fight.

“Responsible governing involves making tough decisions,” Blase wrote.

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S0129-602.J5

Judge says Trump can’t fire watchdog head without cause

Ruling blocks attempt to remove leader of Office of Special Counsel

BY DEREK HAWKINS

A federal judge on Saturday said President Donald Trump cannot summarily fire the head of an independent watchdog agency, setting up a likely Supreme Court battle over Trump’s sweeping attempt to reshape the federal workforce and expand presidential power.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson’s ruling blocks the removal of Hampton Dellinger as head of the Office of Special Counsel, which investigates whistleblower reports filed by government workers and protects federal employees from retaliation, political coercion and other practices that are barred in the federal workplace.

The Trump administration has indicated in court filings that it would swiftly appeal any such ruling to the Supreme Court,

which on Feb. 21 declined to intervene until the litigation proceeded further.

Though its name is similar, the Office of Special Counsel is unrelated to the special counsels appointed by the Justice Department to handle cases in which the department faces a potential conflict of interest.

Dellinger, a Senate-confirmed appointee of President Joe Biden, sued the administration after he received a short email in February firing him from his role without cause. He alleged in court documents that his termination violated a law that says the president can remove the special counsel only for “inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office.”

Dellinger’s five-year term was set to end in 2029.

Lawyers for the Trump administration argued that Trump has the power to remove Dellinger without cause, saying a 1978 statute passed by Congress in the post-Watergate era that restricts the ability to fire the head of the Office of Special Counsel is unconstitutional.

Jackson disagreed, saying in

her ruling that the statute “must stand.” Eliminating the restrictions on Dellinger’s removal, she wrote, “would be fatal to the defining and essential feature of the Office of Special Counsel as it was conceived by Congress and signed into law by the President: its independence.”

“It would be ironic, to say the least, and inimical to the ends furthered by the statute if the Special Counsel himself could be chilled in his work by fear of arbitrary or partisan removal,” the judge added.

Dellinger said in an emailed statement that he was grateful to see the court “confirm the importance and legality of the job protections Congress afforded my position.”

“My efforts to protect federal employees generally, and whistleblowers in particular, from unlawful treatment will continue,” he said.

A White House spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment late Saturday.

Jackson had previously ordered Dellinger reinstated temporarily while she considered

arguments from both sides. An appeals court rejected the Trump administration’s emergency appeal of that order, prompting the administration to ask the Supreme Court to intervene. The justices delayed ruling on the administration’s request so that Jackson could hold a hearing with the parties.

Trump’s attempt to fire Dellinger is part of a broader push by the president to remove government watchdogs who investigate wrongdoing and protect federal employees. Trump also has tried to fire the head of the Merit Systems Protection Board, an independent agency that hears appeals of terminations and other adverse actions against civil servants. A federal judge reinstated her temporarily. Dellinger’s office refers certain cases to the merit board, which issues its own decisions.

Trump has also tried to remove more than a dozen inspectors general, as well as members of the National Labor Relations Board and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Many of the ousted officials are contesting their removals in

court.

In addition to fighting his own ouster, Dellinger has argued that the administration’s mass firing of probationary federal employees is probably illegal. He asked the Merit Systems Protection board last week to halt the dismissal of six probationary employees while his office investigates their complaints. Dellinger said the firings appear “contrary to a reasonable reading of the law” and said he was considering “ways to seek relief for a broader group.”

The merit board granted his request to stay the terminations for 45 days.

The president has broad power under Article II of the Constitution to choose the leaders of federal agencies or fire them at will. But Congress carved out exceptions intended to preserve the independence and impartiality of certain independent agency leaders.

The Supreme Court has upheld for-cause removal rules for agencies with multiple leaders but recently ruled that such restrictions don’t apply to certain agencies with a single direc-

tor. Dellinger’s case focuses on whether he is a true agency head who can be removed at will or an “inferior officer” who can be protected from firing without cause.

During a hearing Wednesday, Jackson challenged arguments by the administration’s lawyers that reversing the firing would encroach on the president’s constitutional authority to appoint people he trusts to executive branch positions.

“His actual job is to be a check and balance on the president,” she said of Dellinger.

Jackson questioned how the special counsel could fulfill his duty of protecting whistleblowers if the president could summarily fire him in the same way he could dismiss a member of his Cabinet.

“How does that make any sense?” she asked.

Justice Department lawyer Madeline McMahon said barring Dellinger’s removal would cause Trump to “lose control over an executive branch agency” and would represent an “intrusion” into Trump’s authority under the Constitution.

A scramble as nuclear experts’ firings reversed

DOGE FROM AI

Trump’s first weeks in office as he deployed the blunt instrument of the U.S. DOGE Service, overseen by billionaire White House adviser Elon Musk, to radically slash government payrolls.

A stream of panicked calls from lawmakers of both political parties led to rapid reinstatement of most of the 314 nuclear engineers, technicians and managers who had been fired via email. But not before the incident inflicted chaos and confusion within the 1,800-person agency, illuminating the dangers of applying Silicon Valley’s “move fast and break things” playbook to government agencies that have deadly serious missions.

The novice cost-cutters installed at the Energy Department, several nuclear workers interviewed said, appeared to lack a basic understanding of the work of the NNSA, an arm of the department that is a key pillar of the national defense.

“These are jobs directly tied to keeping bad things from happening at facilities in places like Tennessee, Texas, New Mexico, Nebraska and Kansas City, Missouri,” said an official who recently left the agency, speaking on the condition of anonymity to avoid damaging their career. “A lot of them are in red states. These lawmakers are not thrilled by the potential for bad things happening in their communities.”

The Energy Department said in a statement that fewer than 50 people were ultimately dismissed from the nuclear agency, and most were in administrative or support roles. It said federal contractors who handle most day-to-day operations at nuclear weapons plants and laboratories were exempt from cuts. Energy Secretary Chris Wright, an oil executive and fracking pioneer, spent much of the previous week reassuring employees during a tour at federal nuclear facilities. He told Scripps News that “I probably moved a little too quickly there, and when we made mistakes on layoffs in NNSA, we reversed them immediately, less than 24 hours.”

The administration’s cost-cutting blitz, rushed and lacking transparency, has forced it into other reversals after the practical or political implications of certain firings became clear.

The firings of officials working to stop the spread of bird flu, protect the food supply and review medical devices have been reversed. Musk himself made light of a mistake he said DOGE made that “accidentally canceled” efforts to stop the spread of the Ebola virus.

The administration has directed agencies to reverse dismissals of military veterans and military spouses, as well as workers who staff the Veteran’s Crisis Line, a suicide prevention program. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fired and then reinstated employees overseeing aid to first responders and survivors of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. At the Environmental Protection Agency, some employees were brought back after officials placed them on leave under the mistaken belief that they worked on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

At the nuclear agency, the initial firings were so haphazard that entire divisions are still reel-

ing, said current and former agency staff. Like other agency and administration employees interviewed by The Washington Post and quoted in this article, the employees spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid reprisals.

Paradoxically, the administration’s rush to notch firings quickly was seen as a missed opportunity by outside specialists and critics who argue the agency needs an overhaul. Nuclear hawks say the operation is mired in red tape that hampers efforts to modernize the arsenal. Plans for replacing old warheads and innovating weapons designs are far behind schedule and over budget.

“The NNSA is failing,” said Robert Peters, a research fellow focused on nuclear weapons at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. “Most of the weapons in the arsenal are older than the average American.”

But the firings did not appear to be driven by a plan to improve the agency. Instead, department leaders compiled a list of all the people who could be fired because they were in their probationary period of employment, and then terminated most of them. The list included many highly specialized experts with advanced degrees who had recently been promoted from another position or joined the agency from the private sector, according to administration officials who were involved.

“It is obvious DOGE people did not understand how our nuclear weapons system works,” said Jim Walsh, a nuclear arms scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Security Studies Program. “This was incompetence.”

After supervisors were given the list in early February of who could be fired, they were given two hours to file any appeals. They were told to keep those written appeals extremely short. Most of the appeals were rejected by Feb. 12.

“They were allowed two or three sentences to make the case for an employee to stay,” said an employee. “Later, supervisors were told all the people on the list would be terminated anyway.”

By midnight Feb. 13, hundreds of letters had been dispatched by leadership at the Energy Department to nuclear scientists, engi-



The layoffs hit Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, which for 80 years has been key to the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

neers, radiation specialists and other workers at nuclear operations from Los Alamos, New Mexico to Oak Ridge, Tennessee. They were abruptly cut loose. Their access to their email and any government computer systems was cut off.

Caught up in the purge were several workers key to the operation of the government’s only plant for assembling and dismantling nuclear weapons, called Pantex. It is near Amarillo, Texas. It is the backbone of the weapons modernization effort, and also the only place where the United States can safely dismantle its many aging warheads.

“We have weapons coming out of the stockpile for good reasons,” said a federal nuclear employee. “There is a long queue for dismantlement. It all has to go through Pantex.”

Walsh was bewildered that the department fired critical workers at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, which remains central to the U.S. nuclear weapons program 80 years after its scientists built the first atomic bomb. Among those who received termination letters were the radiation manager, the emergency preparedness manager and the fire

protection engineer, as first reported by the outlet the Bulwark.

“If you fire all those people and something wrong happens, that can go very badly,” Walsh said. “You think the fires in California were bad? Imagine if you have a radiation fire.”

Many of those dismissed from the agency and then rehired hold Q-level security clearance, which gives them access to nuclear secrets. Nuclear nonproliferation experts in Washington warned of the risks of firing such workers, who have knowledge that’s highly valuable to rogue states and terrorist groups. When the Iron Curtain fell and such nuclear workers in the Soviet Bloc faced unemployment, the United States rushed to make sure they were supported financially so they didn’t sell secrets out of desperation.

The panicked calls the next morning were led by congressional Republicans typically loath to criticize Trump, according to Energy Department officials who were briefed and spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose details.

Among those who dialed Wright’s office, according to those

people, was Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tennessee), a conservative Republican who chairs the congressional subcommittee overseeing the nuclear agency. Tennessee is home to the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, which makes components for nuclear weapons. The facility also stores radioactive materials and manufactures fuel for the Navy’s nuclear-powered vessels. It was built as part of the Manhattan Project to enrich uranium for the first U.S. atomic bombs.

Calls were also made by another House Republican from Tennessee, Chuck Fleischmann, who is a leader of congressional nuclear security and nuclear cleanup caucuses. Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee also raised concern, according to people briefed on the frenzied reaction.

The lawmakers did not respond to requests for comment.

A chaotic rehiring process began after the complaints.

“Cease further forwarding of any termination notifications to employees,” read a notice sent to supervisors the morning after all the firings, according to a copy obtained by The Post. And: “Do not accept or ask staff to turn in their badges or government-furnished equipment.”

Workers were informed there was a pause on all the firings while Wright reviewed them.

The department could not initially reach some of the employees. It had locked them out of their computers and frozen their work email accounts, and supervisors scrambled to locate personal contact information, several current and former employees told The Post.

Some workers said they learned they had their job back not from a phone call or letter explaining what happened, but by receiving a copy of the curt note in which they were fired with the word “rescinded” stamped on it.

“It was chaos and bedlam,” one employee said. “Some people found out they’d been unfired by reading the newspaper.”

Among the smaller group that did not get their jobs back, some said they were told amid the confusion that they were rehired, only to be quickly fired again.

Even after rehiring at the nuclear agency, nuclear experts warn that remaining cuts expose the nation to risk. Dozens of workers who oversaw cleanup of contaminated sites where weapons were developed during the Cold War have not been brought back, said a former administration official with knowledge of the firings at the Energy Department’s Office of Environmental Management. The office’s mission is to protect the public from “some of the world’s most dangerous radioactive sites with large amounts of radioactive wastes, spent nuclear fuel, excess plutonium and uranium, and contaminated facilities, soil and groundwater.”

Among the positions eliminated, according to an employee in the division, were four of the program’s 11 specialists charged with keeping radioactive materials contained so they don’t create an unintended explosion or leak. That includes two of the four workers doing that job at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, where weapons grade plutonium and tritium were processed.

“It is very specialized, very technical work,” the employee said. “Not a whole lot of people can be trained to do this. Losing these folks is concerning. They are there to make sure we handle and store these materials in a way that avoids a nuclear chain reaction from occurring.”

The Energy Department did not respond to questions about these jobs in the statement it sent The Post.

Now outsiders and workers within the nation’s nuclear safeguard office are trying to assess fallout from the Trump mistakes.

“Serious damage has been done,” said a letter to Wright from Democratic lawmakers in the House and Senate demanding accountability from the department. “Recklessly firing personnel without a strategic plan, particularly those with expertise in nonproliferation, security, and arms control oversight, is extraordinarily irresponsible and dangerous to U.S. national security.”

Abigail Hauslohner contributed to this report.



Retired nuclear weapons arrive for disassembly at the Pantex Plant near Amarillo, Texas, in 1996.

Eagle eyes descend on a nest cam to spot eggshell dents

EGGS FROM A1

chance to expect triplets. Wild-life advocates are hopeful Jackie and Shadow will catch a break this year given the less punishing winter weather — a change from conditions that may have affected previous mating seasons.

“Our hope always is that all the eggs hatch and we get to see those beautiful chicks and watch them grow up,” Steers said. “But we have to wait and see what happens. We’re just observers.”

Jackie and Shadow have been together since 2018, Steers said. Bald eagles, which were removed from the endangered species list in 2007 thanks to conservation efforts, typically have one mate for life, but that was not the case with Jackie, Steers said.

Before Shadow, Jackie was mates with another bald eagle, named Mr. B, for almost two years. Shadow arrived during the summer of 2018 and refused to leave despite Jackie and Mr. B’s efforts to chase him away.

Eventually, it was Mr. B who left the area after he was last captured on camera having a nonviolent confrontation with the stubborn Shadow.

Over the years, Jackie, who had one surviving fledgling with Mr. B, named Stormy, successfully hatched three eggs with Shadow: Cookie, Simba and Spirit. Cookie did not survive before leaving the nest, and in summer 2023, Simba and Stormy were reported dead. The cause of their deaths is unknown, according to Friends of Big Bear Valley.

About 70 percent of eaglets



Jackie and Shadow watch over their eggs high atop a tree along Big Bear Lake in Southern California in March 2022.

survive their first year, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Spirit is Jackie’s only fledgling that is still alive, according to Friends of Big Bear Valley’s eagle

history.

Jackie and Shadow’s journey taking care of their eggs has played in front of the live nest camera for as long as they’ve been together. Jackie has been

observed to be a determined bald eagle with a penchant for setting rules and boundaries, such as her desire to be the bird on night watch.

Shadow, Steers said, has been

a devoted learner and follower. In 2019, Steers said, the camera captured Jackie showing Shadow how to feed their chicks.

“He was very diligent,” Steers said. “He would stand behind

Jackie and watch very carefully everything that she did, and then he would try it a little bit at a time.”

Part of what makes Jackie and Shadow so compelling is how their behavior mirrors human attitudes about family, said Beth Pratt, the California director for the National Wildlife Federation. Nest camera viewers can see the birds’ actions range from devastation when the eggs don’t hatch to aggressive if predators come too close.

Pratt has watched the bald eagle camera for about 10 years, back when another pair of bald eagles, Ricky and Lucy, took residence in the area.

The iconic birds of prey can live up to about 30 years in the wild, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, and can travel great distances throughout their lives but generally return to breed within 100 miles of where they were raised.

“I just hope that in a time we don’t agree on much, a lot of us agree that we love wildlife,” Pratt said.

“I do think it’s watching the struggles like Jackie and Shadow that do inspire people to want to do better by wildlife.”

Saturday was the first day of “Pip Watch,” when Friends of Big Bear Valley begin to look for signs that a chick inside the egg has made a dent in the eggshell. The dent can be difficult to spot, Steers said, and it could take days to become visible.

So far, there’s been nothing yet. But all eyes are on the live nest camera in the days to come.



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Cherished Minn. winter tradition slowly melting away

BY SHEILA MULROONEY ELDRED
IN MINNEAPOLIS

On a recent 35-degree day, skaters dressed in bright snowsuits and stocking caps flew across an outdoor hockey rink while school-age children laced up in a warming house and teetered onto the rink.

For decades, rinks like the one in Bryant Square Park in south Minneapolis have served as local winter escapes, drawing thousands of residents to Friday night bonfires, pickup hockey games and children's birthday parties.

But climate change is threatening the future of the city's rinks. Local officials say warmer winters and unpredictable weather are forcing them to reassess the high price tag of this beloved winter tradition.

It takes at least a month of watering the ground 14 hours per day to create the base of the rinks. Once the ice is four inches thick, it has to be sprayed with water daily to keep the surface smooth. But last year, the warmest on record in Minnesota, all the rinks turned to slush after just eight days of mediocre skating in January. That abbreviated season cost the city \$887,640 in state time, said Robin Smothers, spokesperson for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Facing a budget shortfall, the city didn't bother to open two of its rinks this winter. The weather has been colder, making the ice easier to maintain, but temperatures have spiked twice already this season, forcing some rinks to temporarily close, park officials said.

Ideally, the rinks open in time for public schools' holiday break in mid-December, said Jeremy Barrick, assistant superintendent for Environmental Stewardship for the Minneapolis Parks. It met that goal this year for the first time in eight years, but that doesn't guarantee a smooth season, he said. "The climate has definitely impacted that," he said.

Average winter temperatures have been rising between 5 and 7 degrees for decades, and there are 10 to 14 fewer days per year of ice cover on the state's thousands of lakes, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Minnesota's average temperature in December, January and February in 2020 was 18 degrees. In 2024, it was 24 degrees, according to department data.

When Gretchen Robb bought her home in south Minneapolis five years ago, an ice rink on a lake in Powderhorn Park was a major draw. She took up skating there every week and, after having a baby, would push the stroller across the ice. "It's just magical," she said.

She was crushed when the rink didn't open this year. "It's been here for decades — it's a shame to not have that opportunity anymore," Robb said.

But the Minneapolis parks board already has plans to close another three rinks next year as it weighs the cost of maintaining a local winter tradition with the cost of accommodating fluctuating temperatures that have made the skating season unpredictable.

"It breaks my heart to close rinks," said Cathy Abene, president of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. But climate change is forcing their hand, she said.

Across the state, cities and park systems are facing similar dilemmas: How much time and money should they spend holding on to their winter traditions?

Nearby St. Paul and Maple Grove, a Minneapolis suburb, have been gradually moving away from natural ice rinks and moving to artificial ones that use refrigeration systems

to keep them stable. Maple Grove once had about 20 neighborhood ice rinks and now has fewer than half as many, said Chuck Stifter, Maple Grove's director of parks and recreation.

The weather changes have made the traditional neighborhood rinks a "burden on staff and a high cost to operate," he said. "So we've been fading them out — a couple this year, a couple next year. ... The neighborhood skating rink has started to fade away."

Until recently, many Minnesotans took the state's winter activities — from skiing to sledding — for granted. Minnesota is known locally as the "state of hockey."

As the city has become more diverse, so have the rinks, with newcomers from Somalia and Afghanistan now common on the ice, said Jason Green, recreation supervisor of Bryant Square Park. "The skating rink brings out the community — all the diversity and all the ages," he said.

Now those traditions appear to be in peril.

"I'm worried about my 4-year-old being able to enjoy the same winter activities I've had access to," said Elizabeth Makarewicz, whose neighborhood rink in Powderhorn Park was closed this year.

"I remember other winters when a neighbor brought a huge amp down to the rink [in Powderhorn Park] once a week and hosted a DJ night," she said. "Stumbling across dozens of skaters jamming out to dance tunes on a random weeknight in the middle of February was exactly the kind of thing I moved to Minnesota for."

Losing the rink is heart-wrenching, she said, but some neighbors haven't given up on skating on the lake. "Rogue skaters went out and groomed the ice themselves and hosted a skating race earlier this winter," she said.

The dilemma posed by climate change is understandable, said Leigh Combs, who has lived in an apartment overlooking Powderhorn Park for 25 years. But the park board should have consulted local residents before deciding to close some rinks, she said. Without them, she said, a piece of the city's history could be lost.

"So many people don't even know what was happening [between the 1920s and 1940s], when there were speed skating championships on the lake and a couple thousand people would come to watch," she said.

Rinks on lakes and ponds are the most at risk. Natural bodies of water require thicker ice to ensure skaters' safety, making them more vulnerable when temperatures rise, park officials said. Many lakes also have aeration systems that improve water quality for the fish and other wildlife but make them harder to freeze, they said.

If average temperatures rise above freezing — 32 degrees Fahrenheit — for more than two or three days, the ice can start to weaken and turn to slush.

"We value these things," said Barrick, the assistant superintendent for Minneapolis Parks, "but safety ultimately has to be the first priority. And hopefully Mother Nature can give us long winters."

Skating the perimeter of the rink at Bryant Square Park with his family recently, T.J. Williams lamented that one of their local rinks could be on the chopping block next. His son began skating every day after preschool and plays for a hockey youth league.

"It's a quintessential winter experience," said his sister-in-law, Brooke Seykora. "I'd hate to see any of it disappear."



PHOTOS BY MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST



ABOVE: People skate both inside and outside the rink at Lake of the Isles Park in Minneapolis in early February. Warmer winters have made it difficult for outdoor ice rinks to stay open. In January 2024, all rinks turned to slush after just eight days.

TOP LEFT: Jan de Looza, left center in red, Glenn Skuta, standing, and Frank Emanuelson gather around a fire with others at Luminary Lopet on Lake of the Isles, which is part of a winter festival in Minneapolis.

BOTTOM LEFT: A skater glides across the ice as the sun sets at Lake of the Isles Park.



BELOW: Skates are stored on cubby shelves at Lake of the Isles Park, one of many winter escapes used by Minnesotans for pickup hockey games and birthday parties.

BOTTOM: Gretchen Robb reads to sons Wayton, left, and William to skate at Sibley Park.

THE WORLD

Israel blocks aid to Gaza as Ramadan begins

Decision sets off diplomatic scramble, with Egypt and Qatar working on emergency extension to ceasefire deal and Arab countries condemning the blockade

BY ABBIE CHEESEMAN,
CLAIRE PARKER,
SAMMY WESTFALL
AND NIHA MASIH

Israel said Sunday that it had stopped all aid from entering the Gaza Strip, a move that threatened to plunge the territory back into a brutal war as Israeli officials accused Hamas of rejecting a U.S. proposal to extend the first phase of a weeks-long ceasefire.

The decision to block aid to Gaza was made late Saturday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, and came as Palestinians there began observing the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting, reflection and communal meals. It also set off a diplomatic scramble in Egypt and Qatar, where mediators were working Sunday on an emergency extension to salvage the deal, Qatari news outlet al-Araby al-Jadeed reported.

Aid groups also urged Israel to reverse course and Arab governments in the region, including Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, condemned the move, with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty saying it was unacceptable “that aid is used as a weapon for collective punishment and starvation.”

“Israel’s decision, to block aid to over two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as Ramadan begins, is a reckless act of collective punishment, explicitly prohibited under international humanitarian law,” British charity Oxfam said in a statement. “Humanitarian aid is not a bargaining chip for applying pressure on parties, but a fundamental right of civilians experiencing urgent need.”

Netanyahu said Sunday that Hamas had refused to extend the first phase of the ceasefire, which expired Saturday. “If Hamas continues to stand firm in its position and does not release our hostages, there will be further consequences,” he said.

The ceasefire was brokered by Egypt, Qatar and the United States and went into effect Jan. 19, after 15 months of war. It was originally envisioned as a three-phase deal, with the first stage lasting 42 days. During that period, Hamas freed Israeli hostages in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, while Israel allowed a surge of aid into Gaza.

At the same time, the two sides were supposed to begin talks to negotiate phase two, which mediators had hoped would address some of the thornier issues related to the conflict, including the near-total withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, where most of the buildings, infrastructure, schools and hospitals have been destroyed.

But phase-two talks never got off the ground, with each side blaming the other for violating the deal. Hamas said Israel refused to negotiate and had blocked relief supplies critical for Gaza’s recovery, including tents and mobile homes for the displaced, as well as fuel for trucks, generators and other utilities. Israeli officials grew increasingly angry over the ceremonies Hamas and allied militants would hold before handing over Israeli hostages.

Netanyahu said President Donald Trump’s Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, had proposed a 50-day extension to the ceasefire, which would include the release of more hostages and negotiations for a permanent end to the war.

“Witkoff proposed extending



ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

Palestinians sit at a large table surrounded by the rubble of destroyed buildings as they gather for iftar, the fast-breaking meal, on the first day of Ramadan in Rafah.



HEIDI LEVINE/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Freed Israeli hostage Omer Wenkert gestures to supporters from a van as he arrives in Petah Tikva, Israel, after his release on Feb. 22.

the ceasefire because he assessed that at this stage, it is impossible to bridge the gap between Israel’s and Hamas’s positions ... and that more time is needed for negotiations to reach a possible agreement,” Netanyahu said.

But it was unclear when Witkoff sent the proposal to Israel or

whether the other mediators were involved. When asked, U.S. National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes responded with a statement.

“Israel has negotiated in good faith since the beginning of this administration to ensure the release of hostages held captive by

Hamas terrorists,” Hughes said. “We will support their decision on next steps given Hamas has indicated it’s no longer interested in a negotiated ceasefire.”

Hamas has said it wants to stick to the original terms of the deal, and described Israel’s blockade Sunday as “cheap blackmail” and

a “coup” against the ceasefire agreement.

The group’s armed wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, accused Israel of “attempting to reset the process to zero and secure its captives without committing to an end to hostilities.”

Despite the back and forth,

however, an Israeli delegation was expected to travel to Cairo on Sunday, according to an Israeli official and an Egyptian individual with knowledge of the talks, both of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive diplomacy.

“Each side has to meet their part,” Abdelatty said Sunday at a news conference in Cairo. “An agreement has been signed and it has to be implemented.”

Israel is already facing a genocide case at the International Court of Justice that centers, in part, on its obstruction of humanitarian aid to Gaza during the war. The International Criminal Court has also issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Israeli defense minister Yoav Gallant on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the crime of starvation.

“Israel is once again blocking an entire population from receiving aid. ... This is unacceptable, outrageous, and will have devastating consequences,” said Caroline Seguin, emergency coordinator for the medical charity Doctors Without Borders.

Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has helped facilitate the hostage and prisoner exchanges, said the ceasefire agreement “offered a beacon of hope amid unimaginable suffering” over the past six weeks.

But, she said, “any unraveling of the forward momentum ... risks plunging people back into despair.”

Cheeseman reported from Beirut, Parker from Cairo, Westfall from Washington and Masih from Seoul. Karen DeYoung in Washington contributed to this report.

DIGEST

VATICAN CITY

Pope no longer needs ventilation, is stable

Pope Francis remained in stable condition and didn’t need any mechanical ventilation Sunday, the Vatican said. It was a sign that he had overcome the possible complications from a respiratory crisis Friday and that his breathing function overall was improving as he recovers from double pneumonia.

The 88-year-old pope did continue to receive high-flow supplemental oxygen after Friday’s coughing episode, which sparked fears of a new lung infection. Doctors said in their update late Sunday that Francis remained stable but again referred to the complexity of his overall condition and kept his prognosis as guarded, meaning he wasn’t out of danger.

Francis, who has been in Rome’s Gemelli hospital since Feb. 14, rested, prayed in his private chapel and participated in Mass on Sunday. He again skipped his weekly noon blessing to avoid even a brief public appearance from the hospital. Instead, the Vatican distributed a written message in which the pope thanked his doctors for their care and well-wishers for their prayers, and prayed for peace in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Many signs indicated he was improving, especially after a respiratory crisis Friday that resulted in him inhaling vomit during a coughing fit and raising the possibility of a new infection. The doctors said they needed 24 to 48 hours to determine if there were any negative impacts on Francis’s overall condition.

On Sunday, in addition to saying he no longer needed ventilation, doctors reported

that he had no fever or raised white blood cell levels, which would have indicated his body was fighting a new infection.

— Associated Press

GERMANY

New infrastructure, defense funds floated

The parties in talks to form Germany’s new government are considering quickly setting up two special funds potentially worth hundreds of billions of dollars, one for defense and a second for infrastructure, three people with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

Economists advising the parties that will probably form a new government coalition estimate that about 400 billion euros (\$415 billion) is needed for the defense fund and 400 billion to 500 billion euros (\$415 billion

to \$519 billion) for the infrastructure fund, the people said.

Friday’s heated White House meeting between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and President Donald Trump increased a sense of urgency in Berlin to act faster on spending for Germany’s own defense and for Ukraine, they said.

Senior figures from Germany’s conservatives and Social Democrats began exploratory talks Friday about forming a coalition government in the hope that Friedrich Merz, leader of the conservative bloc, which came first in a Feb. 23 election, would form a government by Easter, April 20.

But the hope is that the funds would be approved in March during the current parliament before a new government is formed, the people said.

— Reuters

A 4-year-old Ebola patient has died in Uganda, the World Health Organization said, citing the country’s health ministry. The fatality was Uganda’s second, and brings the number of confirmed cases in the country to 10. The East African nation declared an outbreak of the highly infectious and often fatal hemorrhagic disease in January after the death of a nurse at the Mulago National Referral Hospital in the capital, Kampala. The 4-year-old died Tuesday.

A specialized Haitian police task force hit the stronghold of the country’s most notorious warlord Saturday, resulting in the deaths of several gang members, Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé said. He confirmed the strike on his personal X account, as rumors swirled in both Port-au-Prince and the United States that the

target of the attack, Jimmy “Barbecue” Chérizier — a former police officer who has become the country’s top gang chieftain — was either seriously injured or dead. But soon after the attack, Chérizier released a video in which he confirmed he is alive, and he didn’t appear to be gravely injured. He said police used explosive drones in an attempt to kill him.

More than 40 members of the Islamist al-Shabab armed group were eliminated in an operation by the Somali army and international partners in the Biya Cadde area of Hirshabelle state on Sunday, Somali National Television said in a post on X. “The National Armed Forces, international partners, and vigilant locals are still continuing operations,” SNTV said.

— From news services

European leaders ‘doubling down’ on backing Zelensky

EUROPE FROM A1

agreed to sustain or boost military aid flowing to Ukraine, Starmer told reporters afterward, and to insist that Kyiv be directly involved in any negotiations with Moscow to end the war.

Starmer, who has talked to Trump at least twice since the Zelensky meeting, said the gathering solidified Britain's own commitment to Ukraine.

“We are doubling down,” he said. He announced a new \$2.7 billion loan for Ukraine, backed by frozen Russian assets, and \$2 billion in export financing to help Kyiv purchase air defense missiles manufactured in Belfast.

Europe's aim now, he said, was to arm Ukraine sufficiently so that it could begin any peace talks from a position of strength. Countries have expressed interest in joining a “coalition of the willing” to help monitor a ceasefire, he said, but no formal commitments have been announced.

Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, both of whom also met with Trump last week, were working to shape a diplomatic cleanup of U.S.-Ukrainian relations, Starmer said. The two and “possibly one or two others” would act as mediators between Washington and Kyiv, seeking a ceasefire plan acceptable to Ukraine and Europe that they could present to Trump.

Immediately after the summit, Zelensky flew by helicopter to an audience with King Charles III at Sandringham, the monarch's country retreat. Zelensky, who on Friday left the White House early after the fractious exchange with Trump and Vice President JD Vance, said the king's invitation made him “very happy.”



PETER NICHOLLS/GETTY IMAGES

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer greets Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in London.

Starmer also extended a royal invitation to Trump, and a full-blown state visit, at their Thursday meeting at the White House, as part of his own attempt to shore up American support for Ukraine.

The prime minister, asked Sunday whether he trusted Trump, answered yes, saying he believed Trump was sincere in his desire for a lasting peace in Ukraine. But he acknowledged

that the Oval Office verbal brawl made him squirm.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Sunday's summit, which was planned before Zelensky's meeting with Trump, was meant to make clear that Europe remained committed to the embattled country.

Following the meeting, she told reporters that Europe needed “a surge” in military spending

to rearm itself.

Starmer and Macron made clear they would continue their campaign to rescue at least some American backing for Ukraine, even as they confronted growing evidence that Trump's pivot toward Putin could be genuine and lasting, and that Europe would be forced to take on more of Ukraine's — and possibly its own — defense.

“Beyond the frayed nerves, everybody should return to calm, respect and recognition, so we can move forward concretely, because what's at stake is too important,” Macron told French reporters late Saturday.

Macron said Zelensky had told him that he was willing to “restore dialogue” with the United States, including on a negotiated U.S.-Ukrainian minerals agreement that went unsigned during his abortive Washington visit.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has established warmer

relations with Trump than most leaders in Western Europe, meeting with him three times since Trump's reelection.

The right-wing leader suggested Sunday that Italy could “play a key role in bridge-building.” But the White House meltdown puts her in a squeeze between Trump, other European leaders and her rivals at home. Meloni has staunchly backed Ukraine and opposed Russia, even against pushback from within her ruling coalition. Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, a political rival, lashed out repeatedly at Ukraine over the weekend and called on Italy to side with Trump on ending the war.

The Italian press has featured interviews with Paolo Zampolli, an Italian-born New York real estate investor known as a close Trump ally. During a tour through Italy, Zampolli made clear Trump's antipathy for Zelensky and the anger Meloni could face from the right for backing him.

“Meloni's position on Ukraine must change,” Zampolli told the Italian outlet Il Foglio. “[Trump] doesn't like it.”

Trump officials lined up Sunday to pin the White House blowup on Zelensky. Rubio accused the Ukrainian president of foiling Trump's plans to strike a ceasefire with Russia, claiming Zelensky disrupted American efforts to get Putin to the negotiating table.

“That's our goal,” Rubio said in an interview with ABC News's “This Week.” “Don't do anything to disrupt that. And that's what Zelensky did, unfortunately. He found every opportunity to try to ‘Ukraine-splain’ on every issue.”

Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's national intelligence director, said Zelensky “directly challenged” Trump in the Oval Office and “showed his lack of interest in any good-faith negotiations.”

“There's going to have to be a rebuilding of any kind of interest in good-faith negotiations before President Trump is going to be willing to reengage on this,” Gabbard told “Fox News Sunday.”

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana) said Zelensky “berated and interrupted his host ... instead of expressing gratitude for the extraordinary help that the U.S. has provided his country [and that] effectively helped him stay alive and in power.”

Trump, Johnson said, “is the only figure on the entire globe who is powerful enough to bring both of these parties to the table, and he was in the process of doing that, and he was very, I think, excited about the deal that was going to be consummated. But President Zelensky went in and blew it up.”

At least one Republican lawmaker disagreed with that characterization. Sen. James Lankford (R-Oklahoma), who has supported U.S. aid to Ukraine in its battle against Russia, told “Meet the Press” that Zelensky was “rightfully” seeking assurances that Washington would provide security if Putin were to violate a peace agreement — as he has done in the past.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) said calls by some Republicans for Zelensky to resign were “horrific.”

“Zelensky is leading a country, trying to defend democracy against an authoritarian dictator, Putin, who invaded his country,” he told NBC.

Starmer called the London summit before the White House meeting as a follow-up to two gatherings of European heads of state, who have struggled to respond to Trump's upending of long-entrenched security and trade norms.

The British leader continued his push to place London at the forefront of Europe's response to the Trump upheavals. Starmer fast-tracked a surge in British defense spending Saturday and pledged troops as a main part of a potential future European security force in Ukraine. On Sunday, he called on other European governments to grow their militaries and to join a “coalition of the willing” in taking up the slack in Ukraine.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte expressed optimism that Europe's breach with Trump could be healed.

Andrew Ackerman and Ariana Eunjung Cha in Washington, Ellen Francis in Brussels and Anthony Faiola in Rome contributed to this report.

Washington now ‘largely aligns’ with Moscow’s ‘vision,’ Kremlin says

BY FRANCESCA EBEL

MOSCOW — The Trump administration's rewrite of decades of U.S. foreign policy on Russia, laid bare in the Oval Office confrontation between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, is bringing Washington into alignment with Moscow, the Kremlin said Sunday — a shift that could upend the geopolitics that have governed international relations since World War II.

“The new administration is rapidly changing all foreign policy configurations,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told state television on Sunday. “This largely aligns with our vision.”

Moscow's vision, which has focused on a push to reclaim influence over much or all of the former Soviet Union and defeat liberal democracy, has made Russia a pariah to the West. The United States has given hundreds of billions of dollars in arms and aid to Ukraine since Russia's unprovoked invasion in 2022. Washington led allies in imposing new sanctions on Moscow; the International Criminal Court issued a warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin on charges of war crimes.

But on Sunday, as European leaders rallied behind Zelensky in London, Peskov said the administration's new approach could herald a new thaw between Washington and Moscow.

“There is a long way to go because a lot of damage has been done to the whole complex of bilateral relations,” he said. “But if the political will of the two leaders, President Putin and President Trump, is maintained, this path can be quite quick and successful.”

The Oval Office blowup last week, in which Vice President JD Vance accused Zelensky of insufficient gratitude for U.S. support and Trump warned that his refusal to compromise with Putin was “gambling with World War III,” has been seen here as a “gift” to the Kremlin.

Putin has long worked to drive wedges between the United States and its allies. On Friday, Trump echoed his accusations that Zelensky was obstructing peace efforts.

The performance stunned Russian leaders. Kirill Dmitriev, the chief of Russia's sovereign wealth fund and a lead negotiator in preliminary U.S.-Russia talks, called it “historic.” Propagandist Margarita Simonyan, the editor of Russia Today, wrote that “the Oval Office has seen a lot, but never this.”

Others were gleeful. Former president Dmitry Medvedev gloated over the “proper slap down” of “the insolent pig” Zelensky, and Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova marveled at Trump and Vance's “restraint” in not punching him in

the face. Zelensky's “outrageously boorish behavior,” she wrote, “confirmed that he is the most dangerous threat to the world community.”

The meeting fit Russia's narrative perfectly, Konstantin Remchukov, the well-connected editor of Nezavisimaya Gazeta, told The Washington Post.

“We don't even have to step in — we can just retransmit what the Americans are saying,” Remchukov said. He noted that Putin had “smartly” withheld comment on the meeting, and could afford to stay silent for now.

“The public will conclude that our leaders were correct in their assessment of Zelensky as a leader of Ukraine,” Remchukov said. “This is a huge gift for them.”

But amid the official euphoria lies a degree of caution. Many here are waiting to see results, and are tempering expectations.

The United States and Russia last month held their first talks since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. After the meetings in Saudi Arabia wrapped up, Secretary of State Marco Rubio extolled the “potentially historic economic partnerships” that Washington and Moscow could seize once the war was over. Trump has since spoken of “trying to do some economic development deals” with Moscow. Putin has signaled that Russia is open to economic cooperation, including in developing the Arctic and mining rare earth minerals.

A senior Kremlin official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, told The Post that Moscow had been astonished by the “tremendous change” since Trump's inauguration and welcomed his “pragmatic, rather than enemy-like approach.” But he warned that such deals were “potential possibilities rather than imminent plans.”

“Trump has said that America will be potentially ready to talk about lifting sanctions,” he said. “But only after the peace settlement.”

The head of state-owned banking giant Sberbank, a close associate of Putin, said he did not anticipate a swift end to Western sanctions. “We're working from a scenario in which no sanctions are lifted and, more likely, they are toughened,” German Gref told reporters Thursday. Trump last week extended U.S. sanctions against Russia for another year.

A Russian academic close to senior Russian diplomats told The Post that the Foreign Ministry is currently split between those who won't ever trust the Americans and those who see “a historic opportunity to restore dialogue, quickly prepare a summit and get results.” The academic spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

Not everyone here is ready to celebrate the thaw.

“Trump apparently has decided to be friends with Putin no matter what, and this will not lead to anything good,” said Vlad, a 23-year-old human rights lawyer. Like many interviewed for this article, he spoke on the condition of anonymity out of concern for reprisals. “It is more confirmation for Putin that he can do whatever he wants.”

Remchukov, the editor, said officials are conscious that the U.S. midterm elections next year could mean that the chance to end the war on terms favorable to Russia is fleeting.

“At the top [of government] I have not seen anyone who is too optimistic about ending the conflict,” he said. “Even though Trump's position seems anti-Zelensky, nobody thinks he is pro-Russian entirely — or for good.”

The major reaction within the government that is not transmitted publicly, he said, is that Russia should be prepared to keep fighting.

“Things are continuing seriously, furiously, mercilessly,” he said. “The main task for the Russian authorities is to blow away the euphoria that may have overcome those in the trenches, and the hope that soon there will be peace after Trump's promises — and tell them that they need to get ready for a hard job,” he said.

Russian military bloggers over the weekend heralded the coming spring. “It will soon get warmer, green shoots will begin to emerge, and it will become a little easier to fight,” one wrote on Telegram. “For the youth of Ukraine, I have bad news: You will soon be sent to the front ... and we will tighten our belts and continue to fight.”

Supporters of the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny gathered over the weekend at his gravesite in the Moscow suburb of Marino to mark the first anniversary of his funeral. Navalny, regarded by many as Russia's last democratic hope, died unexpectedly in an Arctic prison colony last year in what family and supporters have called a state-sponsored execution.

On Sunday, a handful of people wept, hung their heads in solemn silence and lit candles. Some expressed doubt about a meaningful change in U.S.-Russian relations or an imminent end to the conflict with Ukraine.

“Trump is so unpredictable,” said Svetlana, 59, who had come to the grave to lay some white carnations.

Others said Zelensky had carried himself “with dignity,” and that they were waiting to see what came of European security summits.

Catherine Belton contributed to this report from London.



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In Europe, doubts over future of U.S. troops stir anxiety

BY ELLEN FRANCIS

BRUSSELS — The Trump administration's widening split with European allies and suggestions of dialing back U.S. troop numbers have fueled European nervousness about how much the continent can still rely on the 80-year-old bargain with the United States that has underpinned its security since World War II.

European leaders are in the uncomfortable position of having more questions than answers about what President Donald Trump plans to do with U.S. troops on the continent. If a drawdown happens, it could be anywhere from just a symbolic withdrawal to Europe's worst fears, and the fallout will depend on how many troops and how fast, officials and analysts say.

Above all, European leaders want to ensure that if some kind of drawdown does take place, it will not be the product of U.S. negotiations with the Kremlin. Trump's move toward realignment with Russia has fed into the European nightmare of Washington accepting Moscow's demands for NATO to roll back from Eastern Europe in a deal that leaves Russia's neighbors vulnerable before Europeans can beef up their defenses.

"This is what they have in mind when they say nothing about European security without Europeans in the room," said Camille Grand, a former NATO official who is now with the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Many NATO allies left a meeting with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth last month believing that Washington could pull thousands of troops from Europe in the coming years, officials said. Hegseth conveyed that his European counterparts should expect a review and eventual reduction of the American military footprint as U.S. interests shift and the administration asks Europeans to take charge of their security.

Despite assurances from Trump officials of no imminent pullout, the president's dizzying reshaping of alliances, including his latest clash with Kyiv, has



U.S. troops being deployed in 2022 to Germany, which has the largest number of U.S. troops in Europe.

reinforced European convictions that they can't predict what Trump will ultimately do. At this critical juncture, the United States' longtime partners are doing a balancing act: trying to bend Trump to their side while preparing for a United States that may no longer be reliable and could even be antagonistic.

The shift has triggered existential warnings from European leaders about the future of NATO and the transatlantic relationship, as they scramble to bolster their militaries and find billions of euros to modernize their arsenals.

Vice President JD Vance has brought another element to the debate: Along with scolding European leaders for shunning the far right, he has tied the future of U.S. troops to European policymaking. The messaging compounds European alarm that its security hinges on the U.S. administration's views of its efforts to regulate tech or hate speech.

"There are thousands upon thousands of American troops in Germany today," Vance said last

month. "Do you think that the American taxpayer is going to stand for that if you get thrown in jail in Germany for posting a mean tweet? Of course they're not."

Germany has more than 35,000 U.S. troops, the largest number in Europe, on a host of bases throughout the country.

Trump has dismissed the idea of withdrawing all U.S. troops from Europe in a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin. "I don't think we'd have to do that. I wouldn't want to do that," he has said when asked if he'd consider a complete retreat. "But that question's never really come up."

While the prospect of Putin pushing NATO out of the Western military alliance's eastern flank may seem distant for now, some European officials warn they must still make contingencies.

As Trump moves to negotiate with Russia to halt the war in Ukraine, Russian officials maintain that they want to eliminate "root causes" of the conflict. In Eastern European and Baltic states, fears run deep that Mos-

cow will make demands beyond Ukraine and seek to roll back the expansion of NATO there in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. Many of Russia's neighbors have drastically boosted defense budgets.

Reflecting the uncertainty, one European diplomat said there was "no way" the United States would order a major withdrawal because Washington needs its footprint here, too, while another said Europeans should be planning for the worst anyway.

The expansive U.S. military presence goes far beyond protecting Europe, diplomats note. It's also about projecting American power and serving U.S. interests. The Ramstein Air Base in Germany, a critical U.S. hub in Europe, has been regularly used for U.S. operations far outside the continent.

Except for a rebound early in Russia's war in Ukraine, the U.S. deployment in Europe has been declining since the end of the Cold War.

U.S. administrations long before Trump 2.0 warned Europe-

ans that priorities would shift elsewhere, including to the Indo-Pacific. But European leaders find themselves insufficiently equipped and are realizing that a U.S. pivot could come more abruptly than expected. Some hope they could persuade the administration that any plans to move forces would involve a discussion over allowing time to prepare to fill gaps.

Three European diplomats said they expect the surge of about 20,000 U.S. troops announced by the Biden administration early in the Ukraine war to be withdrawn.

"I would not be surprised if at some point [those troops] go back to their home base in America," said a NATO diplomat. The forces were sent at a height of emergency planning, so if they leave "it would be, so to speak, a return to normalcy."

If European troops were to send a postwar force to Ukraine to back a ceasefire, that could also hinder efforts to fill any U.S. gaps elsewhere, which will become part of the push-pull in European talks with the Trump administration, analysts said.

Alongside forces spread out across American or NATO-allied bases in Europe, there's also a critical contingent involved in command-and-control. The number of U.S. forces in Europe has fluctuated between about 75,000 and 105,000 since 2022, with about 63,000 permanently assigned while others rotate in and out, U.S. European Command said.

Their mere presence can carry more weight than exact numbers. "It's the sort of physical embodiment of the commitment to European security," Grand said.

But beyond troops, Washington brings high-end capabilities in which Europe is lagging, including for surveillance and long-range strikes, analysts and officials say. It also brings a promise of reinforcements that would be key to NATO quick-response plans.

In European nations that have long relied on Washington to check Russian power, questions

are simmering about whether they would get U.S. backup in a future crisis or have to stand alone.

With the end of the Cold War meant to herald a less belligerent world, the armed forces of European nations such as Britain and Germany shrank, as many invested in other priorities over weapons systems.

European governments have hiked military spending in recent years and defenses aren't in such dire straits that "the world is falling apart if Trump pulls another brigade," Grand said, but reversing trends won't be easy.

"The Europeans have a serious problem of readiness ... that they're trying to fix, but it takes time," he added. "If Trump decides, 'I'm going to pull out U.S. troops from Germany because I'm upset with the trade imbalance,' that's much more complicated to manage than to say we have a plan to do this within X years."

A plan in the first Trump administration that weighed relocating thousands of troops from Germany didn't come to fruition.

In Poland, host to about 10,000 American troops, Hegseth said last month that the administration recognizes its footprint in Europe is "important to deter" Russia, but warned not to assume "that America's presence will last forever." He said what happens in the coming years would be "part of a larger discussion" in Washington and with allies.

The timeline of that discussion remains elusive for Europe. Nigel Gould-Davies, a former British diplomat and senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said it is unclear "how much, how far, in practice," the United States could disengage from Europe.

"I just worry that, given, frankly, President Trump's mercurial nature," he said, "how much confidence really can Europe have in any degree of American protection and defense."

Adrián Blanco Ramos in Madrid, Karla Adam in London and Federica Cocco in Washington contributed to this report.

Campaign aims to get more Democratic physicians elected to public office

BY DAN DIAMOND

A liberal advocacy group is launching a planned \$25 million campaign to elect 100 new physicians to office by 2030, arguing that Democratic doctors must step forward to combat rising pressure on public health institutions and initiatives.

Leaders of 314 Action, which has worked to elect several physicians such as Rep. Kim Schrier (D-Washington), say they plan to recruit and support dozens of doctors in upcoming bids for statehouses, federal office and governorships — and potentially the White House. The group's campaign, dubbed "Guardians of Public Health," comes after all four GOP physicians in the Senate voted for longtime anti-vaccine activ-

ist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to serve as the nation's health secretary and amid the Trump administration's efforts to unwind an array of public health initiatives.

"Our goal is to find 100 excellent thought leaders on health care and science and see if they will serve in office," said Hawaii Gov. Josh Green, who is the only Democratic physician currently leading a state and is co-chairing 314 Action's new campaign. "If we'd have had physicians, nurses, social workers with a public background in greater numbers this year, we would have chosen a different HHS secretary."

Republican doctors have long outnumbered their Democratic counterparts in Congress. Three of the Senate's four GOP physicians hold leadership roles, with

Sen. John Barrasso (Wyoming) serving as the Senate whip and Sens. Bill Cassidy (Louisiana) and Rand Paul (Kentucky) serving as chairmen of committees. Meanwhile, it has been 55 years since a Democratic physician served in the Senate, according to the Senate historical office.

Republican physicians also played major roles during Kennedy's recent confirmation fight. After publicly wrestling with whether to support Kennedy, Cassidy ultimately said he believed Kennedy — who has a large personal following — could help restore trust in America's health system; the Louisiana doctor's vote helped ensure Kennedy's confirmation. Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kansas), a fellow physician, launched a "MAHA" caucus to support Ken-

nedy's ambitions.

Other Republicans pointed to their colleagues' credentials as a way to burnish the candidacy of Kennedy, who was opposed by outside public health experts and physicians who attended his confirmation hearings, protesting his track record of vaccine skepticism. Kennedy has denied that he is anti-vaccine.

"Let the record state there are three medical doctors on this side of the dais," Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana), a chemical engineer, told Kennedy at one of his confirmation hearings, where Daines was flanked by Barrasso, Cassidy and Marshall. "We believe in science."

314 Action leaders say that the GOP has wrongly claimed the mantle of science and that their

new campaign will work to wrest it back. The group — which takes its name from pi, the mathematical constant that is roughly equivalent to 3.14 — backed Democratic doctors, such as freshmen Reps. Herb Conaway (New Jersey), Maxine Dexter (Oregon) and Kelly Morrison (Minnesota) in their successful campaigns last year.

"We're very good at electing doctors," said Josh Morrow, the group's executive director, saying that the upcoming initiative would draw on lessons from past campaigns, such as highlighting the trust that many voters express for their own physicians. Morrow said funding for 314 Action's upcoming campaign would come mostly from grassroots support.

In an interview, Schrier credited 314 Action with helping her

initial campaign for Congress.

"I had no idea what it would mean to run for office, what you need to do, where do you start," she said, praising 314 Action and other groups for helping answer those questions and provide "the initial hand-holding."

314 Action is supporting Amy Acton, a physician and former Ohio public health official, in her campaign for Ohio governor.

Democratic physicians in office have said they are worried about declining confidence in public health institutions and are upset that their GOP colleagues supported Kennedy, particularly given evidence of rising vaccine hesitancy. Texas is experiencing its worst measles outbreak in three decades, and an unvaccinated child has died of the disease.

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ECONOMY & BUSINESS

TECH FRIEND

Too many alerts? This app can turn DM chaos into calm.

BY SHIRA OVIDE

If you're frazzled from ping-ponging among a bunch of apps to check your chat messages, let me suggest a balm for your addled brain.

I'm a fan of Beeper, a mostly free app with a single inbox to read and reply to chats and direct messages from about a dozen services, including Google's texting app for Android phones, WhatsApp, Slack, Meta's Messenger, Instagram, LinkedIn and X.

Think of Beeper like a Marie Kondo that wrangles your DMs and brings a measure of tidiness to your digital communications.

Beeper, which started an app remodeling last week, isn't right for everyone. Perhaps its biggest shortcoming is that Beeper's unified inbox doesn't include chats from iMessage after a bitter disagreement with Apple.

If you can deal with flaws and are eager to stop checking multiple chat apps regularly, give Beeper a shot.

And even if you never use it, Beeper is a chance to reflect on why you have to use the same chat app as your buddy when email doesn't work that way.

What makes Beeper handy

Beeper's premise is simple: It pulls your chat messages into one place.

If different people message you in Messenger, Discord, WhatsApp and LinkedIn DMs, the messages can all show up in Beeper as a consolidated stream. You can read and respond in the Beeper app.

If you only use one or two messaging apps, Beeper is probably a skip. But consider it if you regularly hopscotch to three or more apps for chats and direct messages, or if you wind up mindlessly scrolling Instagram every time you pop in to read one DM there.

I don't use Beeper to pull in messages from my most commonly used communications apps, including Signal and Google Messages, which is the texting app that's standard on most Android phones. Partly, I'm worried about the security of sensitive messages that flow

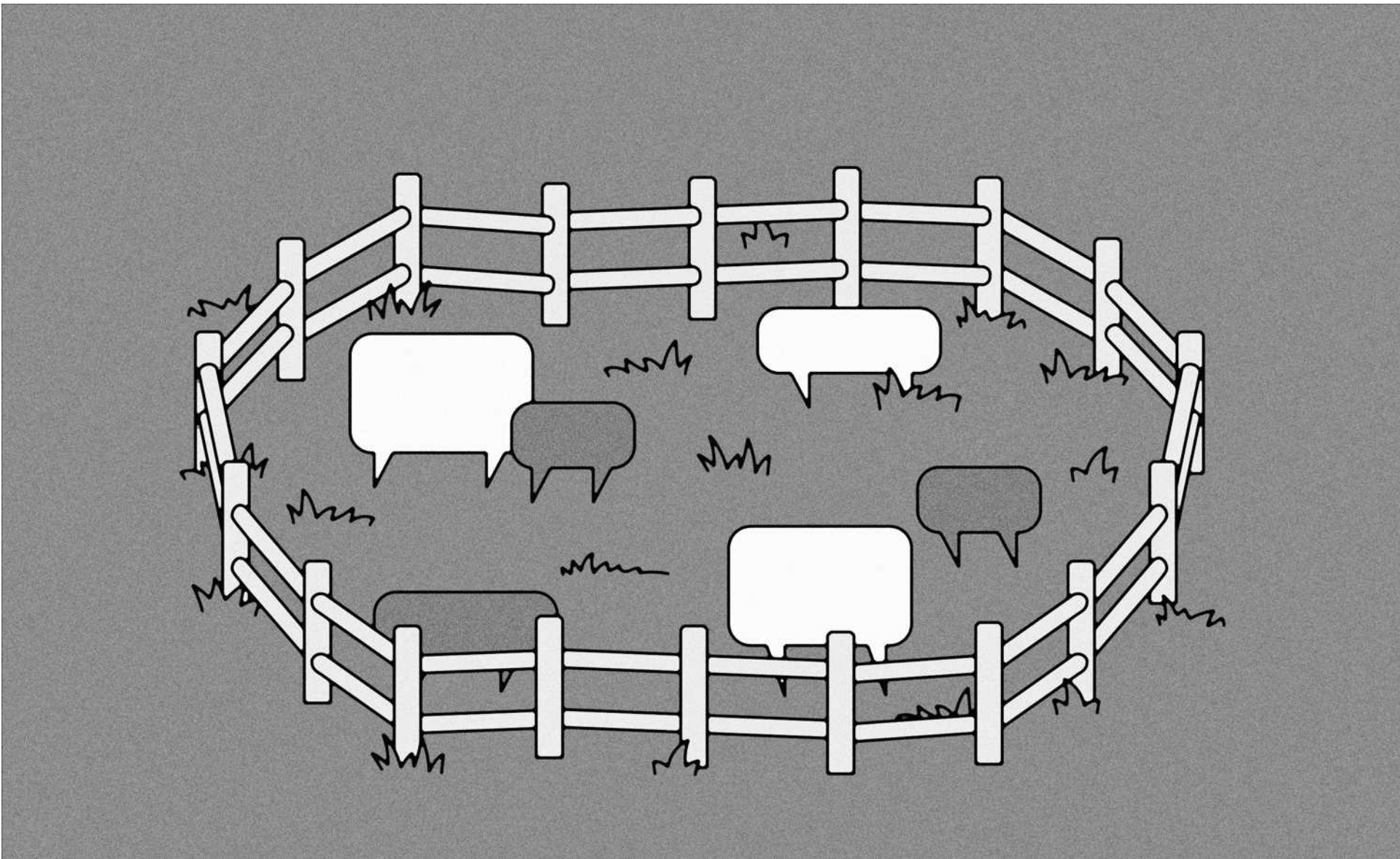


ILLUSTRATION BY EMMA KUMER/THE WASHINGTON POST

through Beeper.

Beeper has previously provided details about the encryption of chats.

Even without using Beeper exclusively for chatting, I was thrilled to turn off notifications for Instagram, LinkedIn, X and WhatsApp and just get Beeper notifications for the messages I receive in those apps.

Not everyone loves Beeper. In app store reviews and Reddit forums, some people complain about hiccups, including that Beeper repeatedly disconnects from messaging services. Others don't like that Beeper lacks some common chat app features in-

cluding complex emoji-like "stickers" and dot indicators that someone else is typing a message.

Kishan Bagaria, a Beeper co-founder, said the company is working on fixing technical issues affecting what he said is a small number of users. Beeper, which is owned by Silicon Valley internet firm Automattic, is working on adding features, Bagaria said.

It's mostly free to use, but it plans to charge a subscription fee for some extra features like multiple accounts on the same chat app. The app is available for iPhones, Android phones and computers.

Chats should be as open as email

We're used to the sprawl of digital communications, but it's nuts if you stop to think about it.

Email doesn't require everyone you message to use the same app. If you call someone on the telephone, you don't each have to use the same phone model.

But with communications apps, you live inside their walled gardens.

If you want to chat with a friend who uses WhatsApp, you also have to use WhatsApp. If you get DMs from professional contacts on LinkedIn, you must use that app to read them. You can

text between iPhones and Android phones, but you get green bubbles and other flaws.

"That's the way the market has evolved, but from a user's perspective a lot of this makes very little sense," said Johannes Ernst, a Silicon Valley technologist who is an advocate for interoperable social networks. "The only thing I want to do is talk to you."

Ernst is a proponent of open social networks that let you read, like and reply to people's posts no matter which service they're using. He said Beeper fits this concept, often called the "fedi-verse," for chat apps.

And Beeper's embrace of chat

apps that play well together has some support from regulators.

The European Union has started to require big chat apps to let people pick one app and still receive messages from others. The regulation is in early stages. The Justice Department's antitrust lawsuit against Apple piggybacked on Beeper's complaints that Apple is making chat apps on the iPhone worse to hold back competition.

Apple has previously said it will "vigorously" contest the government's antitrust lawsuit. The company didn't immediately respond to a request for comment about Beeper.

Critics say Trump order may weaken U.S. data laws

Tech Brief
WILL OREMUS

The tech titans who stood with President Donald Trump at his inauguration in January have yet to see great policy benefits from their tentative alliance with a president Silicon Valley once viewed as an antagonist. While their nemesis Lina Khan is no longer on the Federal Trade Commission, Trump's appointments to lead the FTC, the Justice Department's antitrust division and the Federal Communications Commission suggest continued scrutiny on competition issues and content moderation practices.

But the Trump White House appears to be delivering on at least one agenda item already: taking a tougher line with Europe and other allies on tech regulations affecting U.S. companies.

An executive order signed last month outlined the administration's intention to use tariffs to punish foreign governments that impose taxes and other "unfair" restrictions on U.S. digital services, including internet, social media and cloud platforms. The order followed Vice President JD Vance's warning at an AI summit in Paris that the Trump administration would not accept foreign governments "tightening the screws" on U.S. tech firms.

The order focuses on digital services taxes (DSTs) imposed in recent years by foreign governments, including the United Kingdom, Canada and several European countries. It also mentions regulations that "limit cross-border data flows" — language that some critics say could also describe some recent U.S. regulations. And it includes broad warnings against measures that could "inhibit the growth" or "undermine the global competitiveness" of U.S. companies or compel them to moderate online content.



MICHEL EULER/AP

Vice President JD Vance speaks during the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris on Feb. 11.

While tech trade groups have welcomed the order, a new report argues it could constrain U.S. efforts to protect Americans' personal data and otherwise regulate the tech industry.

The report, published Wednesday by the American Economic Liberties Project, finds that 162 countries have passed data protection laws, and three-fourths of all countries have limited the transfer of data across borders. Among those countries is the United States, where President Joe Biden in 2024 signed both a law and an executive order prohibiting data brokers from moving Americans' sensitive personal data to China and other "countries of concern."

It isn't just Democrats pushing these measures, the report points out. The data broker law passed a Republican-controlled House of Representatives in a unanimous vote. Meanwhile, red states such as Montana have passed their own laws restricting the flow of Americans' genetic and biometric data.

If the Trump administration follows through on the

executive order's promises, it could end up striking trade deals that rule out regulations that Trump and other Republicans in fact support, said Lori Wallach, the director of the project's Rethink Trade program.

"It's like a boomerang with a grenade duct-taped to it," she said.

A tech trade group disputed the claim that the order would undercut U.S. policies.

"The U.S. action on limiting data flows is much more targeted" than the types of European and British regulations that Trump's order focuses on, said Jonathan McHale, vice president of digital trade at the Computer and Communications Industry Association. He applauded the administration for its willingness to use trade policy to deter countries from placing what he views as burdensome regulations on U.S. companies.

His group, which represents leading U.S. tech firms including Apple, Amazon, Google and Meta, has published a wish list of regulations around the world

that it would like to see the U.S. Trade Representative review as part of Trump's "America First" trade policy. They include the European Union's sweeping Digital Markets Act, aimed at preventing unfair competition in the internet sector, which forced American tech giants to make significant product changes.

A European lawmaker who led a delegation to Washington to talk about the E.U.'s tech laws said that would be misguided.

"When we put in place regulation, it's not to milk the American companies," said Anna Cavazzini, a member of European Parliament from Germany and chair of its Internal Market Committee. "It's to protect our consumers, to protect democracy and protect freedom of speech."

Cavazzini said her delegation is meeting with lawmakers, administration officials and civil society groups to tout the merits of Europe's tech regulations, which she argued can benefit American firms and consumers by reining in anticompetitive practices and abuses. She said smaller U.S. companies in particular seem to be "100 percent behind the Digital Markets Act."

While Cavazzini said European regulators are happy to work with Americans on the details of implementing such policies, she sees the idea of rolling back policies that the E.U. passed via democratic processes as a nonstarter.

"We are absolutely not ready to trade our regulation under coercion from another country," Cavazzini said.

She downplayed the threat of retaliatory tariffs by the United States, noting that America's tech industry is at least as reliant on access to European markets as Europeans are on access to its products.

"I think everyone is open to discuss with the Trump administration these topics, but it has to be in a friendly tone and a cooperative spirit," she said. "No one in the E.U. wants to be blackmailed."

Crypto prices soar as Trump touts new strategic reserve

BY ANDREW ACKERMAN

Cryptocurrency prices surged Sunday after President Donald Trump heralded the creation of a national "reserve" for a variety of cryptocurrencies, from bitcoin to lesser-known digital tokens.

On his Truth Social platform, Trump said a "Crypto Strategic Reserve" would help ensure "the U.S. is the Crypto Capital of the World."

That post highlighted several lesser-known digital tokens that would be part of the reserve, including solana, cardano and XRP, a token associated with Ripple. In a second post, Trump added that "obviously, BTC and ETH, as other valuable Cryptocurrencies, will be the heart of the Reserve," referring to bitcoin — the largest and oldest cryptocurrency — and ether, the token used on the Ethereum network.

Trump's posts boosted crypto prices, reversing recent declines amid a general downturn in risky assets.

Bitcoin rose about 10 percent to about \$94,000 per coin as of late Sunday afternoon. XRP jumped about 32 percent.

Solana, the underlying blockchain platform for what are known as meme coins, including the president's official \$TRUMP token, rose 26 percent. The Trump coin was up more than 34 percent.

Crypto prices can fluctuate wildly, which could put taxpayer dollars at risk if the government acquires bitcoin and other tokens for a reserve and their values ultimately fall. Economists and fiscal experts say a strategic reserve would primarily benefit existing bitcoin owners, who could profit immensely if Trump's actions boost prices and they opt to sell.

Jason Furman, a former economic adviser to President Barack Obama, was among the skeptics who criticized the idea. "Torn as to whether this is more dumb or more corrupt," he said on X.

Crypto advocates have dismissed those concerns as they rally behind Trump, who aggressively courted their support throughout the 2024 election by promis-

ing to introduce industry-friendly policies.

Many crypto leaders have touted what they say would be fiscal benefits of a new federal crypto cache — claiming, for example, that the projected rise in bitcoin prices could help the federal government pay down its debt.

The industry, which complained of unfair treatment by former Securities and Exchange Commission chairman Gary Gensler, is also eager to cement its influence in politics and the mainstream financial system.

It has already scored some early wins since Trump took office, including an executive order by the president directing a working group to study and propose changes to crypto regulations. The order also outlines the possible formation of a strategic government reserve of cryptocurrencies within 180 days.

On the legal front, the SEC recently asked a federal court to pause ongoing litigation against Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, because the agency's leadership is rethinking previous enforcement actions. Coinbase, another crypto exchange, said the SEC dismissed a case against it, pending commission approval. The decision was not confirmed by the SEC.

David Sacks, the White House's czar for crypto and artificial intelligence, posted on X on Sunday that more details about the reserve would come at a Friday crypto summit.

The U.S. government already possesses some bitcoin as part of a trove of cryptocurrencies largely acquired by federal law enforcement from past criminal probes and asset seizures. In total, these holdings are valued about \$19 billion, according to Arkham Intelligence, a crypto tracking firm.

But the United States doesn't have a reserve of digital assets. Instead, it holds foreign currencies and gold, while managing emergency stockpiles of medical equipment and critical resources, such as oil, which it periodically releases to try to lower the price of gasoline.

OPINION

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

America’s pointless fight with the neighbors

WHEN PRESIDENT Donald Trump began his trade spat with Canada and Mexico last month, he described his proposed 25 percent tariffs — set to go into effect next week after a 30-day pause — as a way to protect U.S. interests. He argued (often inaccurately) that trade deficits damage the domestic economy and that the United States’ neighbors are allowing drugs and immigrants to pour across the borders illegally.

But the United States’ trade relationship with these countries is not nearly as damaging as Trump depicts it. And he ignores the ways in which U.S. domestic policies perpetuate crime and drug trafficking across the continent.

Start with trade: The United States and Canada maintained a relatively balanced trade relationship throughout the 2010s. In fact, in 2020, the United States had a trade surplus with the country. Deficits have widened since then, thanks largely to crude oil prices. The gap also partly reflects the relatively strong U.S. economy, which has enabled American consumers to buy more stuff from abroad.

In any case, negative trade balances are not necessarily bad. The United States needs products from Canada and Mexico, just as those countries

need American goods — but the amounts are not always equal. From 2014 to 2024, U.S. imports from Canada increased more than 20 percent. Yet in that same time, U.S. exports to Canada still increased about 15 percent.

Countries use their trade relationships in ways that optimize their economic strengths. For instance, automobiles move back and forth across the Mexico, U.S. and Canada borders at various stages of their manufacturing process. This reflects the way the countries use one another’s labor markets to lower consumer prices.

It’s true that the United States has maintained a trade deficit with Mexico for decades. In 2023, the United States imported about \$530 billion worth of goods and services from Mexico, while Mexico imported about \$370 billion worth from the United States. It is also true that Mexico’s inexpensive labor force has drawn many U.S. manufacturers south of the border. But reversing these economic forces would not be easy. Moreover, trade between the two countries is being carried out on terms that the United States negotiated with Mexico and Canada — including during Trump’s first administration with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

This agreement is up for review in 2026, which is yet another reason that Trump’s tariff threats have

been rash. There’s no need to sour relations with key economic allies now, because any grievances can be aired during the upcoming talks.

On crime, Trump often disparages his allies for allowing drugs to cross into the United States. Regarding Canada, his complaints are meritless:

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement is up for review in 2026. There is no need to sour relations with our key economic allies now.

Last year, U.S. Customs and Border Protection intercepted roughly 19 kilograms of fentanyl at the northern border, compared with 9,600 kilograms on the southern border. Indeed, the significant drug traffic streams north from the United States to Canada.

The flow of drugs up from Mexico, on the other hand, is a threat to the United States, and Trump is correct to push for a crackdown. But he should remember: About 80 percent of people convicted

for bringing fentanyl into the United States across the southern border have been U.S. citizens.

The president is foolish to treat the Mexican government with hostility, because he will need its cooperation to address the drug cartels. The Biden administration found some success in ramping up seizures at the border and capturing Mexican drug kingpins. Trump should do the same — and also work to reduce American demand for illegal drugs, including by expanding access to addiction treatment.

Moreover, Mexico’s drug trade is dangerous largely because of lax U.S. gun laws. About 70 percent of all illegal guns found in Mexico have been trafficked into the country from the United States. This southward flow of weapons — the “iron river” — has brought as many as 2 million guns over the border illegally in the past decade, Mexico estimates. If Trump wants to be “tough on crime” and address the drug epidemic, he cannot ignore the United States’ role in arming Mexican criminal organizations.

Casting aspersions, as Trump has done with Canada and Mexico, is easy. Far more difficult is to begin constructive conversations about the problems Trump has identified — without jeopardizing the special relationships that have enabled North America to prosper.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What I saw in the Peace Corps

“Ukraine is not yet dead.”

These were the words we translated from the Ukrainian national anthem. We were young Peace Corps volunteers, new to Ukraine in fall 2005, and some of us didn’t yet understand the significance of these powerful words.

Today, these words of courage are filled with incredible meaning. And they bring to mind the convergence of three events. The world has just marked the three-year anniversary of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. And this week, we will also celebrate the 64th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy’s executive order establishing the Peace Corps, an organization through which Americans give back and promote peace and friendship around the globe.

And yet the United States just abandoned Ukraine by siding with Russia and its proxies to vote against a U.N. resolution condemning Russian aggression in Ukraine. It’s a decision that will impact Europe and my beloved Ukraine for years to come.

When I first moved to Ukraine, it had been a year since the Orange Revolution. As part of our education about the country we hoped to serve, we learned about the different visions for Ukraine embodied in Viktor Yanukovych and Viktor Yushchenko. Yanukovych wanted to bring Ukraine closer to the Kremlin, and Yushchenko was more for a democratic, independent Ukraine. Along with the basics of Ukrainian politics and the Ukrainian anthem, I learned another important lesson through food: Borshch with sour cream was the ultimate Ukrainian dish. It was not Russian, nor was it Polish. It was Ukrainian, and that was important.

Like most Peace Corps volunteers, I lived with a host family at the beginning of my service. I became attached to my Babusya (grandmother), and even after I had moved out on my own, we stayed the best of friends. Everyone who visited my village had to meet her. I shared all the gossip about my friends and family back home. She told me about her experiences under Soviet control, such as when she stood in bread lines to make sure her family could eat. She was made of tough stuff — she was Ukrainian, after all.

A couple of years after my Peace Corps service, I returned to Ukraine to work at a university in Ternopil. That is where my love for higher education began. My mom visited me that year, attending some of my classes to meet my students. She asked them about their country and was impressed by their patriotism. Most of these students were born after 1991, so they only knew a free Ukraine. They loved their country and proudly planned to give back as future teachers. My mom still talks about that conversation today.

Even after three years of war, Ukraine is full of possibilities. Ukrainians young and old have grit and courage, and this inspires me to be stronger, wiser and bolder in the face of injustice, both here and abroad. I am not okay with the stance the U.S. government has taken, siding with Russia. I am unapologetically against Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war on Ukraine, a conflict that aims to turn back time to the Soviet era. “Ukraine is not yet dead.” So why are some American leaders acting as though it is?

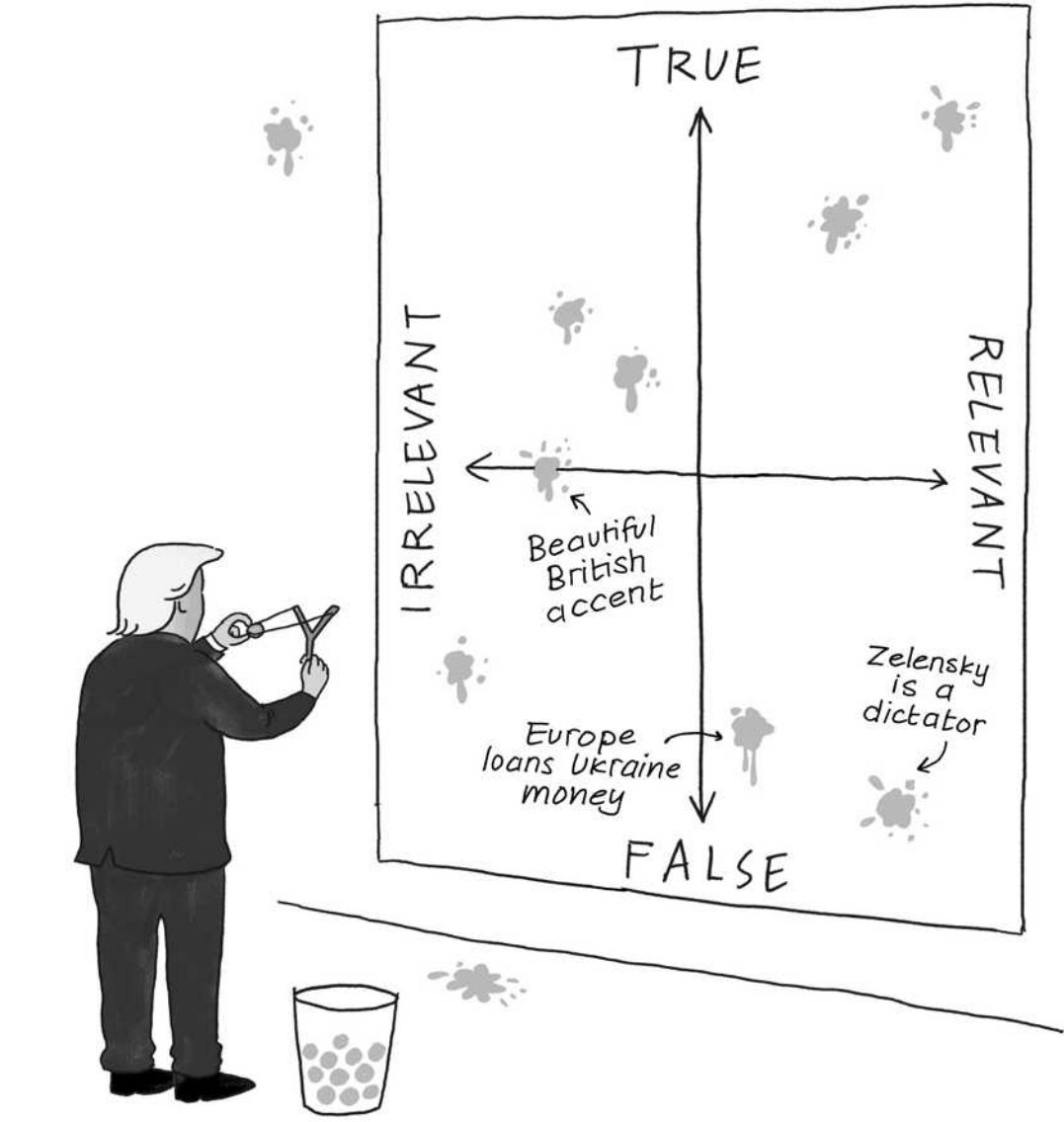
Sharece Bunn, Dayton, Oregon
The writer is on the board of directors for the nonprofit Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Alliance for Ukraine.

Little coffins

One image from 20 years ago in Kenya still burns in my memory. From 2002 to 2004, I worked there as an associate Peace Corps director. My duties included oversight of up to 60 Peace Corps volunteers at rural sites spread over a huge area. I traveled all across that beautiful country on bumpy, dusty roads, learning local conditions and even some Swahili.

EDITH PRITCHETT

Trump’s scattershot statements to the press



In the early 2000s, HIV/AIDS was ravaging East Africa. As I traveled to the rural town of Kakamega in western Kenya, north of Kisumu, my driver would pass through the local market. It was a typical rural gathering place, filled with squawking chickens, bleating goats, enormous stalks of green bananas, exquisite handmade baskets, jiko stoves and lots of dust. But there was something else — something I had never seen in any of my travels in third-world countries.

Instead of furniture, one vendor’s curbside stall displayed caskets. When I first saw the vendor, the offerings were sized for adults, and the vendor had only a few choices. Over time, however, the numbers grew. Worse, they were soon joined by tiny, white, satin-lined caskets for infants.

HIV/AIDS went on to devastate Kakamega along with other parts of Kenya. Fortunately, PEPFAR’s interventions made inroads and saved many lives throughout Africa. As of 2023, 5.5 million babies born to mothers with HIV were not infected because of the drugs PEPFAR provided. New diagnoses in adolescent girls and young women have been significantly reduced by this initiative, which was introduced by the Bush administration in 2003.

Now that the United States has paused foreign aid including PEPFAR, I fear those infant caskets could reappear at the Kakamega market. Have we learned nothing from the earlier scourge of HIV/AIDS and our recent years of covid-19? Today, contagion and civil unrest can spread around the

globe if the conditions are not quickly addressed. Even now, measles is proliferating in Texas, where one child has died.

Given our wealth and power, we have a responsibility to make the world a better place. I know firsthand the challenges, hard work and dangers that U.S. Agency for International Development, State Department, and other agency and contractor employees face when implementing our foreign aid policies. But those jobs need doing. Failure to recognize this inconvenient truth is irresponsible and ethically wanting. This is not simply altruism or charity; we are part of this world. For better or worse, what happens elsewhere will affect us.

Diane Rodill, Seattle
The writer served as a health and human services representative on USAID’s PEPFAR team in 2005.

Our plaque still shines

In 1962, as one of the early Peace Corps volunteers in Chile, I was assigned to a new school for rural youths in what was then the remote and impoverished province of Arauco. The school, then one of the few structures in the small village of Los Álamos with electricity and running water, had been built with U.S. Agency for International Development funding on land donated by the local community. When I returned to Los Álamos in 2011, the school was in full operation, with programs in

forestry management and computer science for local men and women. The original brass plaque by the front entrance — which still looked bright and shiny, even though it had been in place for almost 50 years — acknowledges the construction support from the people of the United States.

In 1964, I was named associate Peace Corps representative in El Salvador, where Peace Corps volunteers worked closely with USAID officials on several community development projects throughout the country. One of the most successful was the school milk program founded by former Peace Corps director Mark Schneider during his own service as a volunteer.

USAID and the Peace Corps, always working with local organizations, provided needed assistance to the people of Latin America as well as to developing countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. It is startling and disheartening to see USAID projects being halted and dismantled by the new administration.

Joseph Keyerleber, Washington

Low-cost, high-impact

The consequences of dismantling the U.S. Agency for International Development to reduce government spending will be detrimental to people in the United States and abroad. Plus, it’s worth noting that some of the USAID funding is wisely and efficiently used on projects in cooperation with Peace Corps volunteers.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan appointed me as the Peace Corps director in Paraguay. It was through the tremendous work of our volunteers that we were able to leverage funding from USAID. For example, for less than \$25,000, we helped establish a sausage factory, agricultural cooperatives and a pioneering wheelchair factory, which was owned and operated entirely by people with disabilities.

The Trump administration’s actions could cause incalculable harm worldwide. With little resistance from the other branches of government, we need the voices and actions of concerned citizens to stop further damage.

Alejandro Becerra, Silver Spring

The difference I saw in Nepal

Fifty years of working in grassroots economic development since joining the first Peace Corps mission to Nepal in 1962 has taught me the power and effectiveness of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

USAID helped practically eradicate malaria in Nepal’s lowland Terai region, initiating an agricultural revolution. Nepal became food self-sufficient, and it has helped reforest the Himalayas in the decades since. About 125,000 women, many of them among the poorest in the world, are now prosperous village bankers and community leaders thanks to USAID’s Worth program — which reaches 1 million women in 16 countries.

Shutting down USAID will undo all of this work. Those responsible should be held accountable for the suffering to come.

Malcolm Odell, Exeter, New Hampshire

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

CORRECTION

David Ignatius’s March 2 op-ed, “The art of a fair deal for Ukraine,” misspelled Kevin Ryan’s last name.

OPINION



President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the Oval Office on Friday.

MARC A. THIESSEN

Zelensky’s greatest virtue becomes his worst vice

On Thursday, President Donald Trump was publicly pledging to help Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky regain Russian-occupied territory at the peace table. “A lot of the sea line has been taken, and we’ll be talking about that,” Trump said during an Oval Office meeting with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. “And we’re going to see if we can get it back or get a lot of it back for Ukraine.”

A day later, Zelensky was engaged in an unprecedented war of words with Trump in the Oval Office — after which the planned signing of a historic minerals deal between the two countries was shelved.

The blowup was Zelensky’s fault. To understand why, one needs to watch the entire 50-minute meeting unfold. Trump greeted Zelensky graciously, praising the courage and resilience of the Ukrainian people, and dismissed their earlier rift as “a little negotiations spat.”

Even after Zelensky refused a White House request to wear a suit, Trump praised his outfit, saying, “I think he’s dressed beautifully.” Trump extolled the minerals deal they had reached and said, “We look forward to getting in and digging, digging, digging.” He publicly pledged to continue military aid to Ukraine and even held out the possibility that he “could conceivably” commit U.S. troops alongside British and French troops to provide security after a peace deal was reached.

This should have been music to Zelensky’s ears. He should have taken the win. Instead, about 24 minutes in — long before his terse exchange with Vice President JD Vance — Zelensky started criticizing Trump in front of the assembled reporters.

He summarily dismissed Trump’s idea of an immediate ceasefire — something that is extremely important to Trump, who is committed to stopping the killing — because he said Putin had already broken ceasefires 25 times.

“He never broke to me,” Trump said. “No, no, you were the president,” Zelensky contradicted him. “He never broke to me,” Trump repeated. Instead of letting it pass, Zelensky contradicted him again: “In 2016, you’ve been the president, Mr. President” he said, adding, “That’s why we will never accept just a ceasefire. It will not work without security guarantees.”

Why on earth did Zelensky choose to fact-check Trump in front of the entire world rather than debate the wisdom of a ceasefire behind closed doors?

A few moments later, after Trump bemoaned the destruction of Ukrainian cities, Zelensky interrupted him again. “No, no, no, you have to come, Mr. President, you have to come and to look. No, no, no, we have very good cities.” He then suggested that Trump was falling for Putin’s propaganda, declaring, “It’s Putin that is sharing this information that he destroyed us.” But Trump was right: Many Ukrainian cities have

been destroyed.

Zelensky’s intervention was reckless and unnecessary. He was in Washington to heal a breach that began with his public suggestion that Trump was living in a Russian “disinformation space” — a suggestion that prompted Trump to lash out and call Zelensky a “dictator without elections.” Why would he do it again? You could see Trump’s demeanor stiffening with every public contradiction from Zelensky.

Then a Polish journalist asked Trump whether he had aligned himself too much with Putin. “You want me to say really terrible things about Putin and then say, ‘Hi, Vladimir, how are we doing on the deal?’ That doesn’t work that way.” That was when Vance jumped in. “For four years in the United States of America, we had a president who stood up at news conferences and talked tough about Vladimir Putin and then Putin invaded Ukraine and destroyed a significant chunk of the country,” Vance said. “The path to peace and the path to prosperity is maybe engaging in diplomacy.”

There was no reason for Zelensky to comment on Vance’s anodyne intervention about the virtues of diplomacy. But he inserted himself into the discussion and chastised Vance, pointing out that “during 2014 till 2022 ... people have been dying on the contact line. Nobody stopped him” — effectively accusing Trump of standing by while Ukrainians were killed. He then underlined that Putin had broken a ceasefire he signed in 2019 while Trump was in office. “What kind of diplomacy, JD, you are speaking about?” Zelensky said, first-naming the vice president.

That was all the opening Vance, a Ukraine critic, needed. “I’m talking about the kind of diplomacy that’s going to end the destruction of your country,” Vance replied tersely, adding, “Mr. President, with respect, I think it’s disrespectful for you to come into the Oval Office and try to litigate this in front of the American media.”

After that, all hell broke loose.

Zelensky should not have litigated *any* disagreements with Trump in front of the media. As retired Gen. Jack Keane noted on Fox News, “He should have understood going into the Oval Office today that when the cameras are on ... the only answer to the questions should be, from Zelensky’s point, ‘Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, America. I’m going to work with you to achieve a peaceful end to this war.’ Period.”

Keane is right. This should have been a back-slapping, feel-good meeting celebrating the minerals deal. Instead, Zelensky hijacked the meeting, jumping in when he was not asked a question, looking for opportunities to interrupt and make his points. If he had kept quiet, the minerals deal would be signed, the United States would be financially invested in Ukraine’s independence, and he would be strategizing with Trump on how to get his territory back during negotiations.

Instead, he has alienated the man on whom the fate of his country depends, a man who had just moments earlier been talking about the possibility of sending U.S. peacekeepers to Ukraine.

Even worse was Zelensky’s stubborn refusal to apologize and to fix the breach. During a Fox News interview that evening (which Trump was almost certainly watching), Bret Baier gave Zelensky repeated opportunities to do so. Instead, the Ukrainian president doubled down. “No,” Zelensky replied when asked whether he owed Trump an apology. “I think that we have to be very open and very honest, and I’m not sure that we did something bad.” It was like watching a drowning man who keeps getting thrown a life preserver but refuses to grab it.

Zelensky should have stayed in Washington until the rift was mended. Trump gave him a way out. In a Truth Social post, he said Zelensky “can come back when he is ready for Peace.” Zelensky should have seized that opening and sent Trump a handwritten note expressing his sorrow that the meeting had gone off the rails, regretting the role he played in its demise, and declaring his intention to work with Trump for peace. Instead, he refused the off-ramp Trump offered him, got on his plane and left.

His stubbornness was an asset in February 2022, when he refused to flee Kyiv in the face of advancing Russian forces. But today, it is a liability. Zelensky snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. There was no “ambush.” He was set up for success. All he had to do was smile, thank Trump and the American people and sign the minerals deal. Instead, he handed Putin a victory, empowered anti-Ukraine Republicans, and weakened the hand of those who want to help Ukraine achieve a just and lasting peace.

The most generous explanation of Zelensky’s conduct is that he is exhausted. He has been heroically leading a nation under brutal assault for three years. He regularly visits the front lines, where he sees the carnage Putin has unleashed firsthand. His emotions are running high, and his patience is thin.

But Zelensky does not have the luxury of getting emotional on the world stage. Europe does not have the military capabilities Ukraine needs to survive. Ukraine cannot have a president who is not on speaking terms with the president of the United States.

Right now, Zelensky seems incapable of managing his country’s relations with Trump. Trump can be magnanimous and has made the path to reconciliation clear: If Zelensky apologizes, Trump will invite him back the White House to sign the minerals pact and all will be forgiven. Right now, Zelensky is refusing, insisting he did nothing wrong. That is not sustainable. Either Zelensky needs to apologize and mend the breach, or he needs to step down and allow someone else to do it.

I sponsored a refugee family. It was an honor.

BY SAUL AUSTERLITZ

One evening in June, my friend Alex and I stood in the baggage claim of Terminal 4 at JFK, anxiously awaiting the arrival of people we had never met before. We had a hand-drawn welcome sign Alex had made, some bags of candy, a list of names — and little else. Standing there reminded me of being in the maternity ward at the hospital, knowing that a person you had not yet met would be arriving soon, and that your life would change in heretofore unimaginable ways.

Alex and I, together with my wife, Becky, and about 20 other New Yorkers, had pledged as a group to sponsor a refugee family from Venezuela through a program called Welcome Corps. This State Department pilot program allowed ordinary Americans to sponsor refugees who had been thoroughly vetted by the federal government. You raised some money and filled out some documents (okay, it was a good chunk of money and a comically absurd number of documents), and if you were approved, you agreed to cover all costs for the new arrivals for the first 90 days. You would also help them find jobs, register for school, find a place to live, apply for IDs and acclimate to American life. (How *does* health care work here, anyway?)

After the arrival of our family, a mother and three children, our group was regularly stretched to the limits of our capacities. Registering the children for school was surprisingly frictionless, but the process of getting an ID for the mom was a nightmarish swirl of changing requirements and in-person appointments whose details had little to do with the websites we pored over like Talmud scholars.

Finding an apartment in New York was nearly impossible and required a kind of ingenuity that we did not know we had. One fall night, about three weeks into a fruitless search, I had a panic attack, unable to catch my breath at the thought of failing to procure housing for the family. I got to know everyone else’s breaking points, and they most assuredly got to know mine, and we each stepped in when someone else had momentarily exhausted themselves.

Some of us discovered we were really good at filling out forms and dealing with bureaucratic snafus. Some of us were good at answering questions about everything from applying for jobs to replacing a SIM card to making a doctor’s appointment. Others were wizards at mapping out fun weekend activities for the family. It was an ongoing lesson in the bonds — simultaneously thick and loose — that form between people in a collective effort. Welcoming someone into our community was itself a means of building that community.

Welcome Corps sponsorship was a reminder that we were not powerless — and never had been. Huge things could be done by ordinary people. Refugees could live safer lives simply because we had agreed to welcome them. We finally got the mother an ID, with a few dollops of help and some conveniently vague

I am sad for the people who will never get to come to the United States — and for the people who will never get to welcome them.

endorsements from bureaucratic higher-ups. The kids were enrolled in camp. The family visited the zoo and the Statue of Liberty and met Method Man while out for empanadas in the East Village. We eventually found an apartment, after we switched boroughs, lucked into a more accommodating broker and agreed to serve as guarantors.

The work was hard. It was also rewarding and meaningful on a scale that I lack the appropriate vocabulary to convey. I will say that we gathered to help others when they most needed our help. It was work that none of us could ever have done alone; it could only have been the result of our collective labors.

President Donald Trump has now indefinitely suspended the Welcome Corps program, which had settled more than 4,000 refugees in two years, along with the country’s entire refugee-resettlement program. White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller has targeted “funding for nonprofit groups helping to resettle refugees,” according to The Post.

We build a country out of our collective political choices. But we also build a country out of the countless individual choices we make about the society we want to live in, the help we want to extend to others and the bonds we pledge to form. The shuttering of Welcome Corps breaks those bonds with casual cruelty. I am sad for the people who will never get to come to the United States — and for the people who will never get to welcome them.

Our family, being legal residents, are thankfully unaffected thus far by the administration’s actions, but others who sought to come to the United States “the right way,” who waited in a third country, sometimes for years, for the go-ahead, are now stuck in place.

I participated in Welcome Corps for many reasons, but one was that my grandfather was a refugee himself, fleeing from the Nazis. Welcoming our refugee family felt like completing a vast circle of debt and obligation, echoing through time.

The mother of our family once asked me how she could repay our group for its kindness. She owed us nothing — it has been the honor of our lives to do this work — but I asked her, some day in the distant future, when she and her family were fully settled in their American lives, to return the favor to another family in need.

I hope that day will still come.

Saul Austerlitz is a writer in New York.



ILLUSTRATION BY SUSIE ANG/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

FAREED ZAKARIA

America used to broadly support freedom. Used to.

Over America’s long history, Americans have often hesitated to support foreign wars and international machinations. George Washington’s Farewell Address warning against entangling alliances cast a long shadow. But from the nation’s beginnings, Americans have usually known whom to root for — those who seek freedom — and whom to condemn — those who try to crush liberty.

Across the United States, you will find statues honoring people such as the 18th-century Polish patriot Thaddeus Kosciuszko and the 19th-century Hungarian freedom fighter Lajos Kossuth, who sought liberation for their people from the Russian and Habsburg empires — and who found enthusiastic support in an America that was still a young and weak nation. When Germany invaded Belgium in 1914, even though it initially stayed out of the war, America organized what was then the largest food aid effort in history to help the victim of aggression. During the Cold War, though it could not help militarily, Washington refused to recognize the Soviet annexation of the three Baltic republics, which are now proud and independent nations. America as a superpower sometimes acted unwisely — in places such as Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan — but even in those cases, it saw its involvement as the protection of freedom and democracy.

Not anymore. The strangest aspect of the past few weeks of American diplomacy — which culminated in the disaster at the White House on Friday — is that the president of the United States has seemed utterly unwilling to say plainly that he supports the victim of aggression against the aggressor who started the war. Or that he admires Ukrainian democracy more than Russian dictatorship. Instead, he and Vice President JD Vance spent Friday’s photo op at the White House publicly scolding Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, telling him to say thank you (which he has repeatedly) and accusing him of being disrespectful. Zelensky’s fault was simply to point out that Ukraine had in fact signed a ceasefire deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2015 but that Putin had continually violated it. President Donald Trump used the occasion to remind all that he felt a special bond with Putin.

Zelensky did not handle himself well. He got emotional, responded too often and took the bait that Vance laid for him. He should have studied how French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer handled Trump: constant flattery and deference. Churchill said of his relationship with his American counterpart, “No lover ever studied every whim of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt.”

But Zelensky is leading a nation at war that has

lost tens of thousands of people. He is fighting for his survival. And he and his nation are fighting for the values of freedom and democracy that America has supported since its founding — against a rapacious dictatorship that actively seeks to undermine the United States, its interests and its allies at every turn. It should not be hard to figure out where your sympathies lie.

Friday’s turn of events took place after weeks of diplomacy in which the Trump administration has bullied its neighbors, asked Canada to cease to exist as a country, pressured Denmark to sell Greenland and Panama to hand over the Panama Canal. It has threatened to impose higher tariffs on its allies than its foes. And it has shuttered almost all the food and medicine programs it promised to the poorest people in the world. Conservative former British cabinet minister Rory Stewart asks on X, “Was it for this that the US spent 80 years building power and alliances? Not to be a force for good. But instead to impoverish neighbours, threaten those it protected, rob minerals from war-torn countries, and break its promises to 100s of millions of the poorest in the world?”

Trump is not just changing American foreign policy. He is reorienting America’s moral compass, a compass that has been firmly set since the country’s founding almost 250 years ago.

Amid Texas measles outbreak, vaccine resistance hardens

MEASLES FROM AI

vaccines is rare and is vastly outweighed by the risk of preventable disease. Two doses of the measles vaccine are 97 percent effective against the virus.

The origins of the outbreak remain unclear. Infections quickly spread within Gaines County's Mennonite community, a diverse religious sect of thousands, some of whom educate their children at home or at private schools without vaccine mandates.

But the outbreak is no longer concentrated just in that group. It has infected people like the Brantner family, who are not Mennonites, spread across nine West Texas counties and crossed the border into New Mexico.

The outbreak spurred hundreds in the region to vaccinate themselves and their children as the threat of the virus became immediate. But it has made others dig in their heels, arguing that measles is no worse than chicken pox or the flu.

While most children with measles recover, up to 1 in 20 develop pneumonia, according to the CDC. One in 1,000 experience swelling of the brain, which can leave a child deaf or with an intellectual disability. For every 1,000 children with measles, one or two die.

Still, some living with the outbreak argue that it is a good thing: Girls can grow up and pass antibodies to their children to shore up protection in infancy, while infected children gain lifelong immunity.

But doctors warn that comes at a cost.

"They could have had that same immunity with the vaccine," said Tammy Camp, a Lubbock pediatrician who oversees doctors who cared for the child who died. "And, unfortunately, there's a child who paid a very heavy price for that."

Why this corner of Texas?

Conditions were ripe for a regional measles outbreak in Gaines County.

It has Texas's third-highest rate of public school children — 13.6 percent — whose parents claim a "conscientious exemption" for at least one vaccine. In one tiny school district, nearly half the students claim an exemption.

In local private schools, officials believe, the unvaccinated rate is also high.

Measles spreads with extraordinary efficiency, hanging in the air for hours even after a carrier leaves a room. That's why public health experts say a population needs at least a 95 percent vaccination rate to achieve herd immunity.

Measles was eliminated in the United States in 2000 but periodically reemerges, often after an unvaccinated person travels to a country where measles still broadly circulates. There have been recent cases in the Seattle area, New Jersey and Southern California. If vaccination rates are high, it's like throwing a match into soaked wood; it fizzles out. If it infiltrates a community with pockets of unvaccinated people, it's like throwing a torch into a parched forest and igniting a wildfire.

Kennedy, a longtime critic of measles shots and other childhood vaccinations, has not urged Americans to get vaccinated, as federal officials did during past measles outbreaks.

In an op-ed published Sunday on the Fox News website, Kennedy called on parents to discuss measles shots with their health-care providers. "The decision to vaccinate is a personal one," Kennedy wrote. "Vaccines not only protect individual children from measles, but also contribute to community immunity, protecting those who are unable to be vaccinated due to medical reasons."

Because Gaines County has no movie theater, limited health-care options and few big-box stores, people travel to cities more than an hour away for entertainment, shopping and advanced medical care — creating opportunities for the virus to spread through new pockets of unvaccinated people.

Measles outbreaks often link back to tightly knit groups with below-average vaccination rates, even if the majority of the community is immunized. In 2017, measles tore through a Somali community in the Minneapolis area, infecting more than 70. The next year, a measles outbreak in New York City infected more than 600 Orthodox Jews.

Disease detectives are seeing similar conditions among the West Texas Mennonites.

A misunderstood community

The spotlight on Mennonites has bred resentment in the community that they are being unfairly blamed, stereotyped as insular or conflated with subsets of Amish people who eschew modern medicine and technology.

Mennonites, descendants of persecuted European Anabaptists, have roots in the community that



PHOTOS BY RAMSAY DE GIVE/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Parishioners leave Sunday services at the Mennonite Evangelical Church in Seminole, Texas. Kaleigh Brantner in her rural home on the outskirts of Seminole. Brantner shows a photo of her son Paxton's measles rash in its early stages. Her 7-year-old son's mild symptoms and swift recovery from measles helped to harden Brantner's anti-vaccination convictions.



stretch back to the 1970s, when hundreds immigrated from Mexico.

Their more than half-dozen churches range from sprawling halls where hundreds pack the pews and services are livestreamed to tiny buildings on the outskirts of town.

Some are recognized as people who speak Low German or as women who wear head coverings. But many are indistinguishable from other residents. They work as baristas, staff home-style cooking joints and run construction companies, sometimes wearing traditional clothing.

Jake Fehr, pastor of the Mennonite Evangelical Church, who wore jeans and a blazer as he delivered a sermon about the dangers of anger, said Mennonite clergy do not use their pulpits to dissuade parishioners from getting vaccines. People base their decisions on their own convictions, he said, which range from skepticism of Big Pharma to a preference for natural immunity.

"It is not a matter of religion," said Fehr, who noted that he and his four children are vaccinated. "This gets pushed as a narrative that we are not taking good health protocols and that we are sort of these anti-vaccine people, and that's just simply not the case."

He and other local leaders said a Mennonite school and day care deserve credit for temporarily closing after measles exposures, as do parents willing to abide by the 21-day isolation guidance for unvaccinated children who have been exposed to the virus.

Tina Siemens, a local Mennonite historian and author, described the ongoing measles outbreak as just another trial endured by a resilient people.

"It's not like, 'Oh we're so anxious, this is an outbreak, we got to really be scared,'" Siemens said. "You work through it and you learn from your hardships and you get stronger because of it."

Anti-vaccine views harden

Zach Holbrooks, executive director of the South Plains Public Health District, which includes Gaines County, recently visited Siemens at the museum she runs to share a medical journal article about the four months it took to end a measles outbreak in an Amish community in Ohio in 2014. Some Mennonites have faulted

him for singling out their community, but Holbrooks said he is just trying to provide information about the burgeoning risk.

Holbrooks worries that younger generations do not understand the danger of measles that he and his staff are now seeing. At a testing site outside the hospital, a mother showed up with a baby with blue lips — a sign the infant was struggling to breathe.

"That has haunted me," Holbrooks said. "That would be the impetus for me to do everything I can to get the message out about measles vaccine."

Vaccines can be a victim of their own success. When diseases vanish, the memory of their dangers and the urgency to eradicate them fade.

Marina Tovar brought her 15-month-old daughter Kambrey to

be vaccinated at the Lubbock Health Department after Sunday church services. She had already planned to vaccinate her daughter when the family's insurance plan restarted, but sped up her plans after reading about the outbreak.

"Why would I chance her getting it?" Tovar asked, noting that her two older children received vaccines. "And they've been fine. So we just wanted to keep her protected the best we could."

But firsthand experience does not always change views on vaccines.

On a morning last week at a Mennonite-owned pizzeria, a Mennonite couple told a waitress that their 16-year-old son's recent bout of measles was minor. "It was a rough couple of days, but nothing worse than a flu," the father, Peter, said.

In an interview, the couple said they view childhood vaccination as tantamount to Russian roulette because of the risk of side effects. They spoke on the condition that their last names not be published because, they said, local Mennonites have been harassed and ostracized since the outbreak began.

The couple said those who choose not to vaccinate children are unfairly vilified. They said they protected the community by keeping their son and his older siblings home after he tested positive for measles.

"Some people have it really bad but most people don't, just like with the vaccine," said Mary, the mother. "Where there is risk, there should be choice."

Experts say the choice not to immunize has consequences for the community, even when people

experience mild illness and isolate once sick. People infected with measles can transmit the virus four days before the rash appears. Infants are too young to be vaccinated.

Still, some here believe the vaccines themselves are responsible for the rapid spread of the virus. They repeated false claims from anti-vaccine activists outside Texas who blamed free vaccine clinics launched in the early days of the outbreak for accelerating infections.

They have seized on a handful of measles cases in vaccinated patients (five out of 146, with vaccination status unknown for 62, according to state data) to argue that the unvaccinated are not to blame. But epidemiologists say it's not surprising that occasional infections will occur among vaccinated people when an outbreak is rapidly growing.

Ben Edwards, a physician in Lubbock who treats some patients in Seminole, including a family with measles, recently released an episode of his podcast about the outbreak, in which he described mass infection as "God's version of measles immunization."

Edwards said the ideal treatment for measles is not all that dissimilar from other infectious diseases. His advice for patients is to undergo a "mitochondrial tune-up" to strengthen their immune response.

"Go get a green juice, or just drink some water with a pinch of sea salt and go sit outside and listen to a bird chirp," Edwards said. "It sounds crazy, but it's the basics. It's what our ancestors knew."

His views stand in stark contrast with the pleas of those on the front lines of the outbreak to get vaccinated. All 20 confirmed measles patients treated at Covenant Children's Hospital in Lubbock were unvaccinated, officials said.

Summer Davies, a pediatric hospitalist, has cared for about half of them, including the one who died.

"This is a disease they didn't have to get if they had adequate vaccination or if we had adequate herd immunity," Davies said. "Knowing there was a way to prevent it is the heartbreaking part."

Elana Gordon and Lena H. Sun contributed to this report.

"They could have had that same immunity with the vaccine. ... And, unfortunately, there's a child who paid a very heavy price for that."

Tammy Camp, a Lubbock pediatrician who oversees doctors who cared for the child who died



Nurse Michelle Wagner prepares to administer the measles vaccine to 15-month-old Kambrey, accompanied by her mother, Marina Tovar, at the Lubbock Health Department.

Renewed push for juvenile justice bill

Maryland proposal aims to have more cases begin in system for minors

BY KATIE METTLER,
EMILY GUSKIN
AND DANA MUNRO

Youth justice advocates in Maryland have tried for more than a decade to end the practice of charging children as adults, first pushing a bill in 2012 that would have sent all young people, regardless of their offense, to the juvenile justice system.

Even after years of support for the changes in the overwhelmingly Democratic state and two government reports that recommended doing so, the General Assembly has not taken any action on the politically fraught issue.

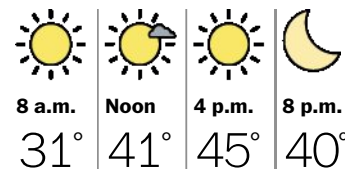
Now some Democratic lawmakers are trying again, this time with a proposed compromise bill that would send only young people accused of the most violent offenses, including murder and rape, to adult court automatically. Everyone else would start in the juvenile system.

“This is a narrowly tailored start,” one of the bill sponsors, state Sen. William C. Smith Jr. (D-Montgomery), said at a hearing last month before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, which he chairs. State delegates in the House Judiciary Committee heard additional testimony on the bill last week.

The proposed reform seeks to undo Maryland’s outlier ranking among other states. Nationwide, only Alabama charges more children as adults per capita than Maryland, according to a report from the nonprofit Human Rights for Kids. Maryland has the fourth-largest percentage of people

SEE JUVENILES ON B4

TODAY’S WEATHER



High today at approx. 3 p.m.: 46°

Precip: 0% Wind: WNW 6-12 mph

For weather news, go to B6

MARYLAND

A mother convicted of six counts of child neglect is sentenced to 21 years. B4

OBITUARIES

Scholar Tom Beauchamp, 85, helped define modern bioethics. B4

INSPIRED LIFE

Readers share their wishes for future 100th birthday celebrations. B6

RETROPOLIS

In 1931, a D.C. family lost their home because of their race

BY PETULA DVORAK

Jocelind Julien stood in a wooded park in a tony part of D.C.’s Chevy Chase neighborhood. Nearby, children were playing and two men walked golden retrievers.

“This is where my family’s house was,” Julien said, “looking out over the hill.”

Her family had 0.38 acres of land and a house on Broad Branch Road in Northwest Washington. In the spot where it once stood is now a basketball court.

It was taken from the family by the federal government’s D.C. Commission in 1931. Because they were Black.

“The Presence of this house, with its colored occupants, so close to a white school is a source of possible friction that is thought desirable to remove,” Assistant Engineer Commissioner H.L. Robb wrote in the Evening Star. The new all-White Lafayette School was nearly constructed

and they were the last to leave a once-vibrant Black enclave.

Julien has been telling her family’s story for years now, and it bookends a new documentary that examined similar stories to explain the yawning wealth gap between Black and White Washington.

The filmmakers traced the way these forced evictions and housing discrimination have left the District’s White households with 81 times the median savings and assets as its Black households, a 2016 report showed.

“It’s happening all over the country,” said Sabiyha Prince, a cultural anthropologist and filmmaker behind “Diminished Returns: The Black Wealth Gap in Washington, D.C.”

“It’s repeated, and it has devastating impacts on the economies of Black households and what they can hand down to their progeny moving forward, right? Because that’s a key way in which

people accumulate wealth, through inheritances,” Prince said.

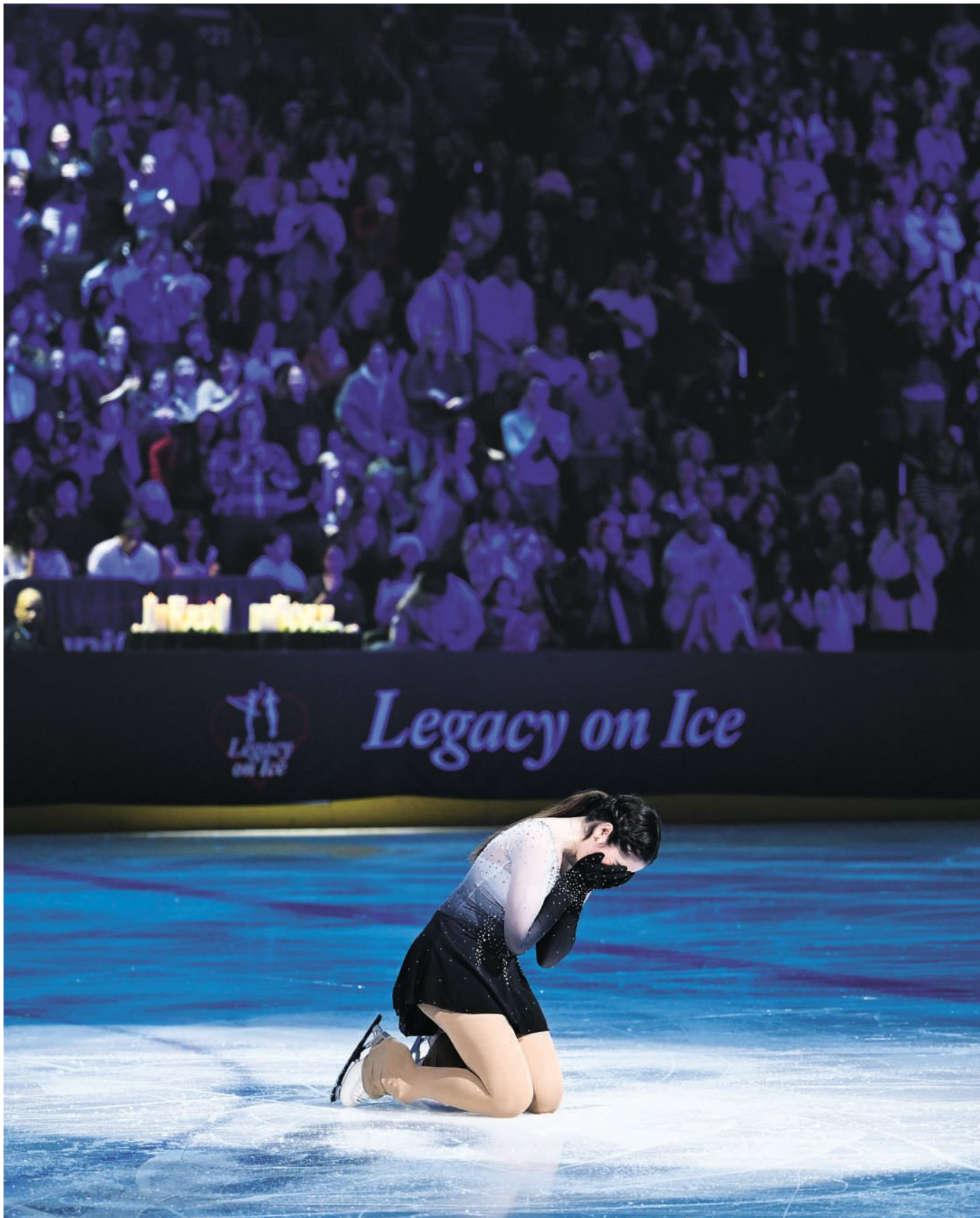
There’s a myth that Black families simply let that land theft happen. But in her research, Temi F. Bennett, an attorney and executive producer of the documentary, found testimonies of Black families who fought to keep their homes — and their neighborhoods and their family’s futures — intact.

“The arguments were being made that Black people were dirty, we didn’t upkeep our homes, and that there was crumbling infrastructure,” Bennett said. “And so it was justifiable to take this land from these Black folks, right? Because they don’t know how to steward it, right? When that wasn’t the case.”

History and data show that lack of consideration for diversity, equity or inclusion over centuries created this wealth gap.

The film makes the argument

SEE RETROPOLIS ON B2



CRAIG HUDSON/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

An emotional tribute

Figure skating community gathers to remember the victims of January’s plane crash

BY DANA MUNRO

In the center of the vast, sleek ice at Capital One Arena stood a slip of a girl in a bedazzled black and white dress — Isabella Aparicio, poised to begin her skate.

A recording of her late father, 48-year-old Luciano Aparicio, playing Pachelbel’s Canon in D, came over the speakers. For 1 minute and 50 seconds, Aparicio glided across the ice, her lyrical movements matching the music.

In her final moment, Aparicio stuck

a pose, then sank to her knees, laying her face in her black-gloved hands. She broke down in tears.

Aparicio’s father and 14-year-old brother, Franco, of Dunn Loring, died aboard American Eagle Flight 5342 when the plane, inbound to the D.C. area from Wichita, collided with a Black Hawk helicopter on Jan. 29 and crashed in the Potomac River. Nearly 30 passengers were ice skaters, family members and coaches, according to U.S. Figure Skating, the national governing body for the sport. The skaters and their families were returning from

a U.S. Figure Skating National Development Camp.

Isabella was among the surviving skaters, parents, family members and friends from across the region who converged in Washington on Sunday to honor the skaters who died in the crash. The memorial event at Capital One Arena was co-hosted by Olympic champions Brian Boitano and Kristi Yamaguchi and included appearances from skaters Nathan Chen, Nancy Kerrigan and many more. Tickets were \$30.

SEE TRIBUTE ON B2

Isabella Aparicio breaks down at the end of her “Legacy on Ice” performance on Sunday.

Across N.Va., a budget crunch

FEDERAL CUTS WILL AFFECT LOCALITIES

Cities and counties anticipate tough choices

BY TEO ARMUS
AND EMMA UBER

As the Trump administration continues slashing the federal bureaucracy, local governments in Northern Virginia are already starting to feel the pain — wallet first.

In a region where about 1 in 8 workers are employed in federal civilian positions, likely cuts to agencies and federal assistance programs in Washington are compounding across the Potomac River to create some difficult choices for the region’s local governments as they consider spending plans for the next fiscal year.

The uncertainty is looming on multiple fronts: Cuts to federal assistance are likely to shrink some funding streams, forcing localities to find other ways to pay for schools, police and other services. But President Donald Trump’s moves are also expected to leave many residents in this mostly wealthy region out of jobs and hurting for local government assistance.

The puzzle for elected officials, then, will be how to balance their budgets at the same time that their largest stream of funding — their taxpayers — may be struggling. And it’s all with few clear answers about what might happen next.

“We don’t know sitting here today what the real impact is,” said Jeffrey C. McKay (D), chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

SEE BUDGETS ON B3

D.C. chief elaborates on support for pardons

Her backing of clemency for two officers reflected her core beliefs, she says

BY PETER HERMANN
AND ELLIE SILVERMAN

After a jury in 2022 convicted two D.C. police officers for their roles in a pursuit that killed a young Black man, the police chief at the time said the department “supported the independent and thorough review” by federal prosecutors and had “confidence in our judicial system.”

But hours after President Donald Trump pardoned Officer Terence Sutton and Lt. Andrew Zabavsky in January, a new police chief, Pamela A. Smith, took a different tone. Her statement personally thanked Trump and his newly chosen interim U.S. attorney for D.C. and asserted that any wrongdoing should be addressed through discipline and training, “not through criminal prosecution.”

This about-face in department thinking, largely backed by the mayor, took some senior police officials and mayoral aides by surprise, according to several people in the Bowser administration who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations. They worried the statement could be a harbinger of a new era — a signal of appeasement to the Trump administration and less scrutiny of police conduct as the District awaits an executive order with an anticipated focus on criminal justice.

In an interview Friday, Smith said her statement about the pardons came from her core beliefs and was not intended to

SEE PARDONS ON B3



“DIMINISHED RETURNS: THE BLACK WEALTH GAP IN WASHINGTON, D.C.”

Jocelind Julien stands on the spot where her family’s home stood before they were evicted by the D.C. government in 1931.

Skaters honor crash victims with benefit performance

TRIBUTE FROM B1

The “Legacy on Ice” memorial, organized by Monumental Sports & Entertainment, Entertainment Gang and U.S. Figure Skating, raised money for three charity groups to support the victims’ families and first responders.

The event honoring the deceased featured seasoned skaters and pairs as well as up-and-comers. For 14-year-old Sofia Bezkorovainaya, a member of Team USA, that meant donning the dress her friend Everly Livingston wore last season and performing the program the teen planned to do this coming season, said Dalal Badri, a close friend of the Livingston family. Alydia Livingston, 11, Everly Livingston, 14, Donna Livingston, 48, and Peter Livingston, 48, of Ashburn, all died in the crash.

In a sparkly pale pink skating dress, Bezkorovainaya seamlessly glided and leaped across the ice to “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” completing the performance twirling on one leg and holding the other in the air.

She was joined afterward by about a dozen skaters from the Washington Figure Skating Club, and the group performed to “You’ll Be in My Heart” from the movie “Tarzan.” It concluded with the skaters encircling Bezkorovainaya as she held a bouquet of white flowers skyward.

For two fathers who lost spouses and young skaters on the plane, the event was a painful reminder of what their children should have been able to become.

In the immediate aftermath of the crash, Andrew Ter said, he almost resented ice skating for snatching away his daughter, Olivia, 12, and wife, Olesya Taylor, 50, who were returning home from the Wichita camp. But thinking about it in the weeks that followed, he thought of how happy the sport made Olivia and how devoted she was to the discipline despite countless falls and blisters.

“It wasn’t ice skating that ended her life. It was the disaster,” Ter said. “Ice skating is still going to be part of our lives.”

Ilia Kulik, who coached Olivia, dedicated his performance to her and her mother. He blew a kiss to the sky as he finished.

Ter, who brought his mother-in-law and 14-year-old daughter, Anne Valerie, to Capital One on



PHOTOS BY CRAIG HUDSON/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



ABOVE: Maxim Naumov, 23, performs at the “Legacy on Ice” benefit at Capital One Arena. Naumov’s parents, champion figure skaters turned coaches Evgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov, died in the January plane crash. **LEFT:** Isabella Aparicio skated to Pachelbel’s Canon in D during the event. Her brother Franco and father, Luciano, also died in the crash.

Sunday, said he was perhaps most looking forward to seeing Chen, a 2022 Olympic gold medalist. Chen was an inspiration to his daughter, he said, and Olivia once wrote in an essay for a contest about how much she looked up to him.

Chen’s appearance was also a special one for Doug Lane, who lost his 16-year-old son, Spencer, and his 49-year-old wife, Christine, on the flight.

For Lane, traveling back to D.C. for the event felt too soon after the family recently held a memorial of their own, he said.

Seeing the young people on their way to stardom might be the hardest part of his continued involvement in the skating world, he said.

Spencer “has a lot of peers who will grow older, and some of them will break through to that level,” Lane said. “I’ll be certainly the first person that’s cheering those people on, but at the same time I think that will also be bittersweet.”

Toward the end of the event, Maxim Naumov, 23, emerged wearing a glittering maroon top. Naumov lost his parents, Evgenia Shishkova, 52, and Vadim Naumov, 55, both skating coaches in Boston, in the crash.

When he stopped skating, the audience rose and applauded for several minutes as he looked longingly at the thousands of viewers and wiped his tearstained face. A fellow skater later hugged him.

Sunday’s performance ended with the skaters arranging themselves in the shape of a heart on the ice as Lady Gaga’s “Hold My Hand” boomed over the loud-speaker.

While the crash led to an insurmountable loss for the skating community, Badri said something has been gained, as well.

“This incident, this thing that happened, has made people stop and think and appreciate just the moment,” Badri said.

Skaters, parents and coaches who had lost contact are reconnecting. Those with “bad blood” are putting aside their differences and greeting each other more warmly now. She said there’s a greater acknowledgment of the preciousness of the little moments.

“It had changed the skating community completely,” Badri said.

Teo Armus contributed to this report.

Documentary connects housing discrimination to the District’s wealth gap

RETROPOLIS FROM B1

for giving reparations to families such as the Juliens in D.C. to right this wrong. And the filmmakers believe the nation’s capital is the perfect place to do this because there is a precedent.

Reparations were paid here — to enslavers.

On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the “Act for the Release of certain Persons held to Service or Labor within the District of Columbia.”

That paid former enslavers \$300 for every person who was emancipated — 3,100 in total.

That cost the U.S. government \$930,000 — almost \$30 million today.

And yet, it is a debate whether families who were displaced, such as Julien’s, deserve compensation. A house across the street from where her family’s former home stood is worth about \$1.5 million today, according to real estate estimates.

If they could’ve stayed in that neighborhood, they might have had a family asset that was the seedling for generational wealth.

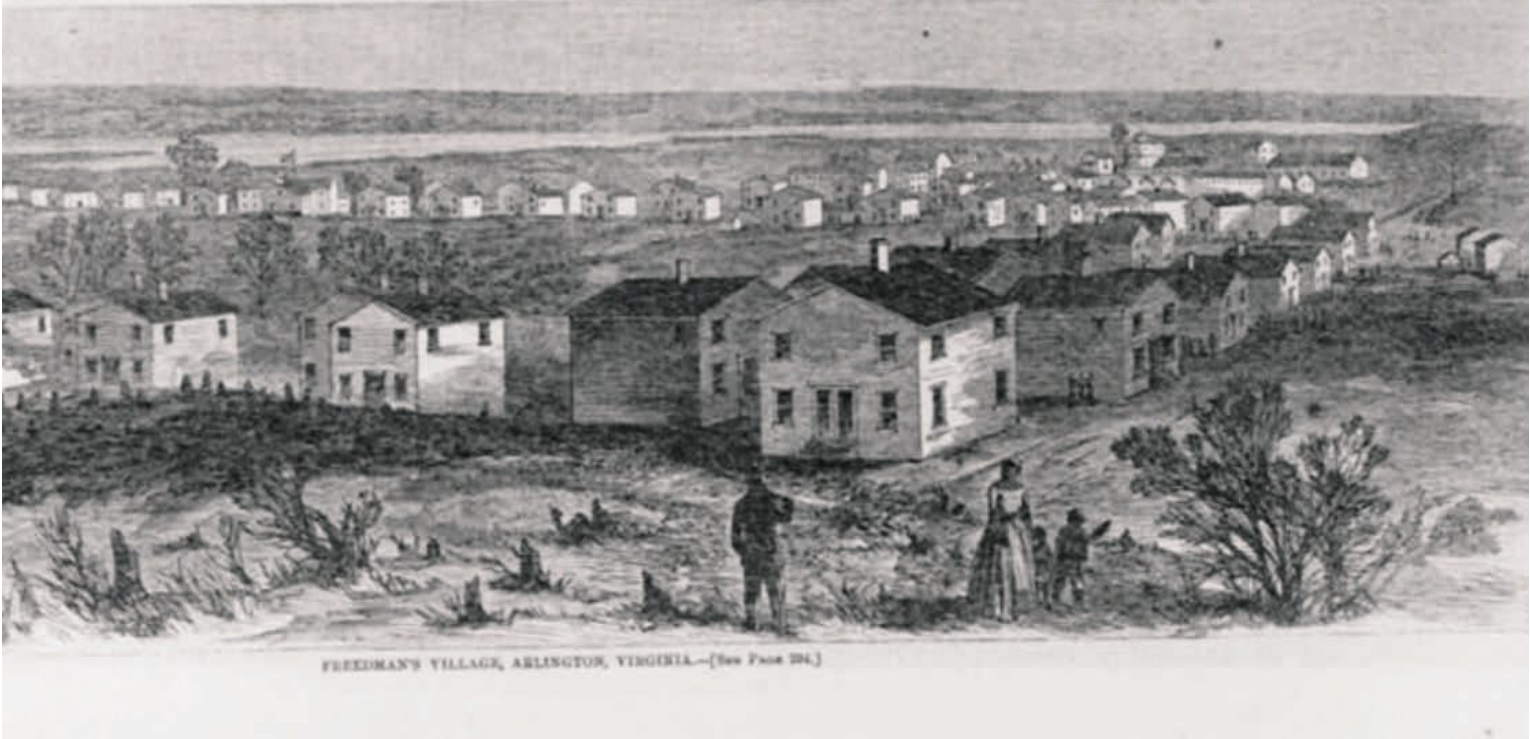
The half-century-long ownership of that home had been a remarkable accomplishment for the family, direct descendants of George and Martha Washington’s enslaved maid.

It was a little more than six decades after slavery ended that they were able to get a foothold in the reunited nation.

And Chevy Chase was a thriving Black neighborhood.

In 1928, The Washington Post did a photo feature on 73-year-old Mary Moten. She was a neighbor of Julien’s paternal grandmother.

She was the daughter of Mary Harris, “who piloted President John Quincy Adams and his party up the old Potomac Canal to the ground breaking for the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal,” the June 2 feature photo caption said.



HARPER'S WEEKLY/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The feature never mentioned that she had recently received an eviction notice. And there was very little coverage in the news about the land seizure, only about the overcrowded schools and grand homes being built in this swelling suburb within D.C.

Julien’s family was forced out three times.

The first was when Black homes that were part of “Freedman’s Village,” built for emancipated people to restart their lives in 1863, were seized in 1900 and the land was incorporated into Arlington National Cemetery.

Julien’s family moved to Irving Street in Northwest Washington but was again displaced when a school was built there, Julien said in an oral history interview with the Historic Chevy Chase D.C. project.

When her ancestors settled in Chevy Chase, it was transforma-



MADISON SHERMAN/“DIMINISHED RETURNS: THE BLACK WEALTH GAP IN WASHINGTON, D.C.”

TOP: An illustration of “Freedman’s Village,” which was built for emancipated enslaved people and eventually was incorporated into Arlington National Cemetery. **ABOVE:** Sabiha Prince and Temi F. Bennett speak with viewers at a screening of their documentary.

“It has devastating impacts on the economies of Black households and what they can hand down to their progeny moving forward, right? Because that’s a key way in which people accumulate wealth, through inheritances.”

Sabiha Prince, a filmmaker

tive.

“It was a place for them to land, to give them a sense of permanence that they otherwise wouldn’t have,” she said in the film.

They weren’t evicted because the new all-White Lafayette School needed the space. The building was nearly finished when the family was told to leave, and it was made clear why.

“The impact from losing this land was great — in fact, it had a ripple effect with my family,” Julien said. “It took everything from them.”

Her family had to move far away to be able to afford housing. This is the kind of restart that forces generations of Black families to have to start over again. It keeps them from building generational wealth.


“You’re destabilizing people’s sense of community,” Prince said. “You can harm their ability to come together and be in community, which is a form of strength and capital. And of course, you can then displace them physically, manufacturing further instability, making them have to go from place to place.”

When the film was being made in 2023, the D.C. Council was getting ready to act on landmark legislation, the “Reparations Foundation Fund and Task Force Establishment Act,” that would create a group to study reparation proposals.

The bill has since been renamed the “Insurance Database Amendment Act” and will be up for a vote soon.

The case for reparations shouldn’t be a cultural wedge, Bennett said. The argument in favor is firmly grounded in historical fact, she said.

“Black folks are not asking every White person to give them something,” she said. “We are literally going to our government and saying, ‘This is a case for repair.’”



The Guide to Offers
The Washington Post

Enter for the chance to win a pair of tickets to
Rumours ATL: A Fleetwood Mac Tribute on March 21 at the Lincoln Theatre

“Rumours prides [itself] on being the most authentic Fleetwood Mac Tribute... [The group] will make you dance, sing along at the top of your lungs and you'll even learn something new about Fleetwood Mac at each performance” (rumourSATtribute.com). Songs include “Don’t Stop,” “Dreams” and “You Make Loving Fun.” “With such a great selection of hits from one of the most beloved bands in music history, Rumours ATL is sure to please even the most discerning fan” (protributebands.com).

See details at washingtonpost.com/entertainment/events/lists/388



N.Va. localities facing tough choices in budget season

BUDGETS FROM B1

pervisors. “I just know there’s going to be no one else in the country that’s going to be harder hit by what’s happening in Washington than we are.”

City and county lawmakers appear to be leaving no option unconsidered for now — looking at increases to or the addition of a meals tax, potential property tax hikes, boosts to their funding reserves, and cuts to some programs and local government jobs down the line.

Steady revenue coming from taxes on the booming data center industry has offered an extra cushion in exurban counties such as Loudoun and Prince William and may even allow for tax cuts there. But closer to D.C., still-empty office buildings and mounting shortfalls in previous years have only added to the budget crunch.

“In some ways, it’s taken the worst elements of a lot of things that have happened in the past and put them all together,” Arlington County Manager Mark Schwartz told reporters during a briefing on his locality’s proposed budget last week.

Rising real estate assessments across the region will mean that most homeowners in Northern Virginia will see their tax bills go up, even in jurisdictions that decide to freeze their property taxes. A further increase in taxes could be especially risky, some officials warn, because it could further squeeze federal workers as they face layoffs.

“This uncertainty means that there are residents that have a job today and may not tomorrow,” said Alexandria Mayor Alyia Gaskins (D). “This is a time for us to be conservative and be cautious as we go in there.”

With some funding streams potentially about to shrink, though, it may not be so simple.

The U.S. DOGE Service, overseen by Elon Musk, has attempted to lay off thousands of federal workers and slashed dozens of federal programs it has called wasteful and counter to its mission of streamlining the federal government.

That has already sparked chaos within agencies as well as at many nonprofits and government contractors that depend heavily on



2022 PHOTO BY JAH CHIKWENDIU/THE WASHINGTON POST

Jeffrey C. McKay (D), chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, leads a jurisdiction that is proposing \$60 million in budget cuts.

federal funding. And while it is likely to have cascading effects on local and state governments across the country, the impact is expected to be especially profound in an area where the economy has long been dominated by the federal government.

About 175,000 residents of Northern Virginia are civilian federal workers, according to a study by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. In some localities closer to the core of the D.C. metro area, as many as 1 in 5 jobs held by the region’s residents are civilian roles with the federal government.

Budgets in the region’s largest jurisdictions — Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties and the city of Alexandria — are all drafted and then presented by local government staff members at the directive of elected officials. Lawmakers are now voting on what tax rates to advertise and later in the spring will choose what to adopt.

Officials in Fairfax, the region’s

largest locality, have entered the budget process with a nearly \$300 million shortfall. The budget plan proposes roughly \$60 million in cuts, including shedding 208 county jobs — and that’s before considering the impact of any reductions to the federal workforce.

“I don’t think anybody is happy with this budget, but this is where we are,” County Executive Bryan Hill said when presenting the proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors. “We have been working diligently to figure out how to make this mildly palatable.”

This marks the second year the board has entered the budget process with a significant shortfall. Supervisor Pat Herrity (R) said that the board had been warned of impending financial hardship for years but that his calls for a comprehensive audit have been ignored. Meanwhile, some ideas to close the \$292.7 million budget gap have drawn criticism, including a suggested 1.5-cent hike in the real estate tax rate and over \$25

million in proposed reductions to public safety agencies such as fire, police, sheriff and 911 dispatchers.

“It’s unacceptable to our residents; we are literally taxing people out of their homes,” Herrity said. “We have a spending problem, not a revenue problem.”

The continued decline in the value of commercial real estate and a reluctance to seek more money from homeowners means the board may revisit its hotly debated meals tax to help generate more revenue. The controversial tax was struck down by Fairfax County voters in 1992 and 2016, but it no longer requires a referendum to implement thanks to a 2020 law.

The advertised budget proposal does not include a food and beverage tax but notes that a 3 percent tax on restaurant meals would generate more than \$48 million in revenue and could eliminate any need to increase the real estate tax rate.

McKay estimated that roughly a third of that meals-tax revenue

would come from Fairfax residents and urged his peers to consider it as a way to save homeowners from increased tax rates.

“For the people who lose their jobs and are struggling to stay in their homes, adding a 1.5-cent real estate tax increase is hard to imagine, versus we start charging the people who can afford to go out and eat,” McKay said.

In neighboring Arlington, county board members voted 4-1 in February to give themselves the option to raise the real estate tax by 1 cent — even though Schwartz, the county manager, did not include such an increase in his proposed budget.

“The appetite of the board is to exhaust all possibilities to balance the budget without having to add an additional burden on taxpayers,” Board Chair Takis Karantonis (D) said in an interview. “The only thing is that right now we can’t assess what the cascading effects might be.”

Karantonis said that the budget was crafted in mind expecting a

“significant downturn” down the pike. Arlington depends on the federal government for about \$88 million of its nearly \$1.7 billion budget, but Karantonis said that figure did not take into account the “cascading factors” that could rear their heads later on.

A halt in government travel could result in lower hotel tax revenue, he said, and efforts to shrink federal office space in the D.C. area could also hit commercial real estate tax revenue as some agencies cut down on their physical footprint in Arlington.

This budget cycle is also the first in most Northern Virginia counties to feature collective-bargaining agreements between school employees and school districts. Most lawmakers in this Democratic-dominated, generally labor-friendly region — who green-lit the practice in the first place — say they are committed to meeting the likely added cost of salary increases negotiated through a union contract.

Loudoun is the only one of the five big localities cutting real estate tax rates this budget cycle, in large part thanks to its status as “data center capital of the world,” said Supervisor Juli Briskman (D), who chairs the board’s finance committee.

Data centers generate about 38 percent of the revenue to Loudoun County’s general fund, but the industry’s growth has been a point of contention in the region. Even in a time of apparent prosperity, though, county leaders remain worried about what reductions to the federal workforce will mean for residents.

“Northern Virginia has been able to weather recessions really well because of our federal workforce, so if our constituents lose their jobs in big numbers, that would be really detrimental to our local economy,” Briskman said.

And in Prince William, Board of County Supervisors Chair Deshundra Jefferson (D) said that she would be advocating an increase in the “computers and peripherals” tax on data centers to provide some flexibility, in addition to boosting the amount of money set aside for reserves.

“We’re making smart investments in the county, but we’re going to have to be judicious,” she said.

Chief says her support for 2 pardons was not intended to be taken politically

PARDONS FROM B1

be taken in a political context. She was not with the department when Karon Hylton-Brown was killed or when the officers were charged. She joined the force as the agency’s chief equity officer seven months before the officers were convicted.

Smith declined to comment on the city’s relationship with the Trump administration. She denied that supporting the pardons might cost her public support or represents a change in her commitment to accountability. “That is not how I would characterize it,” the chief said. “I think I have a strong relationship with the community.”

But the reversal of what was then a rare criminal prosecution of police, coupled with the strong support from Smith, left some city officials and activists wondering where civil rights enforcement is headed in the District in the Trump era, amid a broader hardening of the city’s posture on criminal justice issues.

D.C. Council President Phil Mendelson (D) in an interview called Trump’s pardons “a step back in time to when society treated police officers as never doing anything wrong” and said he disagreed with Smith’s conclusions that criminal charges against the officers were unwarranted.

Sutton and Zabavsky were convicted of conspiracy and obstructing justice, and Sutton also was found guilty of second-degree murder in the death of Hylton-Brown, 20. The fatal pursuit heightened racial tensions in the Brightwood Park neighborhood, prompted days of destructive protests and clashes with police, and came to symbolize the aggressive style of policing that activists were trying to curb.

Mendelson said he is particularly upset about the pardons of obstruction-of-justice convictions that found the officers tried to cover up the improper pursuit by sending away a key witness and lying to their supervisor about the severity of Hylton-Brown’s injuries.

Patrice Sulton, a criminal justice reform advocate and executive director of the DC Justice Lab, called Smith’s support of Trump’s pardons disappointing and out of step with popular

opinion.

“I don’t know how many D.C. residents are on their side,” she said. “I think D.C. residents oppose police violence. I don’t think they know much about the facts of the case, but they know that Karon’s death was very much a clarion call at the time.”

Hylton-Brown’s death in the fall of 2020 came months after a summer of nationwide protests and civil unrest after the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, and amid a debate over police reform in the District that led to new laws curbing policing practices and funding. It also came as an independent Police Reform Commission established by the D.C. Council debated and later recommended sweeping changes to policing in the District. The police chief at the time, Peter Newsham, pushed back against the D.C. Council and many of commission’s recommendations, and Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) urged lawmakers to slow down, arguing that the District was ahead of other cities in curbing abusive police practices.

The D.C. police union, which vehemently opposed the earlier reform efforts and blamed changes for a 2023 crime spike, publicly and privately lobbied the White House for the pardons, saying one of the officers had been “wrongly convicted of murder” and both had been targeted for political reasons amid the progressive moment.

After the pardons, Bowser gave Smith her full support, asserting in a public statement that police “had long believed” the criminal prosecutions were unwarranted and that any wrongdoing “was best addressed in MPD’s administrative processes.”

Speaking later to reporters, Bowser said the pursuit of Hylton-Brown violated policy, but she also thought the murder charge was “out of kilter with what happened.” She said city leaders accepted the jury verdict, just as they now accept the pardons. Neither Bowser nor Smith addressed allegations that the officers tried to cover up their actions that night.

The mayor has sought to find common ground with the Trump administration, shedding a more confrontational style taken during his first term. Because the



VALERIE PLESCH/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

D.C. Police Chief Pamela A. Smith speaks during a security briefing a day before the Nov. 5 election.

District is not a state, the federal government has outsized influence on its functions. Trump last month remarked to reporters that the federal government “should take over” management of the city because he thinks its leaders are not reducing crime, cleaning up graffiti or dismantling homeless encampments.

For two days, Bowser remained quiet after he pardoned the Capitol rioters who assaulted D.C. officers, and when she did comment publicly, she issued a single statement addressing both the insurrection and Hylton-Brown’s case. She wrote two sentences on the riot, saying of one of the largest and most brutal attacks on D.C. police in history: “The events of January 6 cannot be forgiven or erased. Our officers, city and democracy were assaulted on that day.”

Trump’s interim U.S. attorney, Ed Martin, posted on X shortly before the pardons that he had spoken with Smith about “protecting the Blue,” adding, “Under Biden, they chose politics over police. I choose police.”

Martin, who has been publicly critical of police accountability measures, did not address the pardons in response to questions but issued a statement saying Smith has engaged his office

from the start, maintaining a “relationship necessary to fight crime in the District and keep our residents safe.” He said that Smith has introduced him to officials and others “throughout the city” and that “with her leadership at MPD, we can make and keep D.C. safe for everyone.”

Matthew M. Graves, the former U.S. attorney for D.C. whose office brought the criminal charges against officers, declined



COURTESY OF KHALI BROWN

Karon Hylton-Brown, seen in 2019, was fatally injured during a police chase a year later.

to comment.

Sutton was sentenced to five years in prison, and Zabavsky to 4½ years. They had been free pending appeals, which are moot. Each remains suspended as police undertake an administrative review of their actions.

In a statement, Sutton’s attorney, J. Michael Hannon, called the prosecution of his client a “foul blow” and said, “I can think of no reason Mr. Martin’s action should not be praised as an act of justice.” Zabavsky’s attorney declined to comment for this article.

David L. Shurtz, who represents the mother of Hylton-Brown’s daughter in a civil lawsuit against D.C. police, said he thinks Trump pardoned the officers “as a lever to say he supports the cops,” and as “a pretext to take the heat off” for pardoning rioters who assaulted police at the Capitol.

Smith’s statement praising Trump was issued under the department’s name, not hers, in an apparent attempt to distance her from language some city officials felt was over the top. Smith, in an interview, said she wrote the statement. In it, she noted the dangerous work by police that “requires professional judgment and split-second deci-

sion-making.” She called the prosecutions of Sutton and Zabavsky “literally unprecedented,” adding that “never before, in any other jurisdiction in the country, has a police officer been charged with second-degree murder for pursuing a suspect. These members could never have imagined that engaging in a core function of their job would be prosecuted as a crime.”

Three city officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations, said many on the police force believed the pardons gave a welcome voice to those on the force who disapproved of the criminal charges and the department’s initial response, which they believed was designed to avoid offending the top prosecutor at the time.

Past statements from police and Bowser varied in tone. When charges were filed in 2021, Smith’s predecessor, Robert J. Contee III, emailed officers that “there are many in the community who recognize the hard work that you do, who support the work that you do.” Contee added that “unfortunately, we are dealing with the decision we are dealing with today, but I assure you we will get through this together.”

A year later, when the officers were convicted, Contee issued a public statement saying that “since the beginning of this process, MPD has supported the independent and thorough review process conducted by the United States Attorney’s Office. We have confidence in our judicial system, and we trust that the jury examined all the facts, deliberated carefully, and arrived at their decision fairly.”

Contee did not respond to a request for comment.

Ron Moten, a longtime anti-violence activist in the District, said he gives Smith the benefit of the doubt on her stance, given what he called her “entrenchment in the community.”

“From my experience and what’s in her heart,” Moten said, “I know she is really about the people.” Of Bowser, he said in dealing with Trump, “she’s got to be smart and try to find common ground where she can. ... If not, we’re going to be in a situation that could be brutal for our city.”

Lawmakers weigh juvenile justice bill



Maryland Sen. William C. Smith Jr. (D-Montgomery), center, at the State House in 2023.

JUVENILES FROM B1

incarcerated for crimes they committed as children. And under the current system, Black children in Maryland are seven times as likely to be charged as adults as their White peers.

Though Maryland's political map is deep blue, its residents have historically held more moderate views on crime and public safety, forcing the majority-Democratic General Assembly to balance data-backed reform proposals with emotionally charged public opinion. On the issue of jailing young people, Marylanders are torn. According to a January Washington Post-University of Maryland poll, most voters in the state favor treating juveniles as young as 14 like adults for crimes involving guns and violence.

In cases in which a juvenile has been accused of murder, 82 percent of Maryland voters said 14-to-17-year-olds should be treated the same as adults versus given more lenient treatment in a juvenile court. Majorities also said that teens accused of illegal gun possession (68 percent), carjacking (63 percent) and assault (59 percent) should be treated as adults. Those are four of the five most common crimes for which teens are charged as adults, according to statewide statistics.

In follow-up interviews with The Post, recidivism was a top concern among several poll respondents, with some saying their feelings about young people and crime have been influenced by news coverage of several high-profile violent crimes for which teens were arrested. The attorneys who work with justice-involved young people are just as divided on the issue.

During the Senate bill hearing last month, Smith said that tension is why he is proposing a compromise. Despite the debate his bill is sparking, Smith said he knew the dozens of advocates, attorneys and judges in the audience who were there to testify on the topic at least fundamentally agreed that Maryland's juvenile justice system needs an overhaul.

"We all agree on the fundamental assumption of what the problem is," Smith said. "We just vary on the solution."

Defense attorneys and other reform advocates told lawmakers they don't think the bill goes far enough, while Republicans and a

cohort of prosecutors said they oppose the bill as written because it is too lenient.

"Tinkering with these parameters right now is not only unnecessary, it is unwise," said Jamie L. Dykes, the Wicomico County state's attorney.

Skeptics of his bill, Smith said, should know that the proposed reform targets crimes that currently start in adult court but are almost always transferred down to juvenile court — an objective informed by statistics that show that to be the case for about 85 percent of the cases that automatically start in adult court.

Smith said the bill isn't meant to fix every problem with juvenile justice in Maryland. "I view this as a step that is truly necessary to correct past injustice," he said at the hearing, "but also to unlock future potential for folks enmeshed in the criminal justice system at an early age."

Smith's proposal would reduce the number of charges for which 16- and 17-year-olds are automatically charged as adults from 33 to about a dozen, including: first- and second-degree murder, attempted first- and second-degree murder, voluntary manslaughter, first- and second-degree rape, attempted first- and second-degree rape, carjacking with or without a weapon, and using a firearm in the commission of a crime. It would also bar law enforcement from automatically charging 14- and 15-year-olds as adults for any crime.

Starting in juvenile court, advocates say, means a young person's case is resolved more quickly, and with greater access to resources such as therapy for underlying trauma and counseling aimed at helping them take accountability for their actions.

The resurrected debate comes at a time of conflicting narratives in Maryland surrounding public safety. The Post-UMD polls found that 82 percent of Maryland voters feel safe in their neighborhoods. Yet over half of the state's voters (55 percent) said crime is "extremely" or "very" serious in the state, down from March 2024 when 64 percent said the same but similar to September 2022, when 54 percent said crime was serious.

All the while, data shows that overall violent crime has been declining for years. Since 2021, homicides across Maryland have fallen by 32 percent, and in Baltimore

City specifically, homicides have dropped by 41 percent, according to data from the U.S. attorney's office.

Among young people, the statistics are less clear-cut. But the state's Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), which has focused its deterrent strategy on gun violence, has said that the number of youths under DJS supervision who were victims of nonfatal and fatal shootings fell by 25 percent and 50 percent, respectively, between 2023 and 2024, even as the number of overall children under the department's supervision increased by 11 percent.

Republicans and prosecutors have criticized the reform-minded approach of the DJS's secretary, Vincent Schiraldi, and scrutinized the efficacy of the historically under-resourced and understaffed agency. So far this legislative session, Gov. Wes Moore (D) has stood by the department, allocating more funds in his proposed budget.

During the bill's first hearing before Senate lawmakers, advocates of juvenile justice reform said it will allow the DJS to operate more efficiently, calling the proposal largely procedural yet fiscally smart. An analysis of the bill by the General Assembly's nonpartisan Department of Legislative Services found that the proposed changes would save the DJS an estimated \$17 million and the Office of the Public Defender \$1.85 million annually by fiscal 2027 — money that Smith said could be reinvested to get children the services they need.

Maryland's influential legislative Black Caucus and the Office of the Public Defender have both said the issue is one of their top priorities this session.

A group of 10 senior and retired Maryland state and federal judges wrote a letter of support for the bill, noting the change would bring Maryland "much closer to the long-standing standards" of the American Bar Association and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Other supporters include several people who were charged as adults for crimes they were accused of committing as teens, saying their time in the adult system was harsh and delayed their rehabilitation.

The support far outweighed the opposition at the bill's initial hearing, with pushback coming largely from a group of prosecutors and

state's attorneys from Baltimore City and Charles, Wicomico and Baltimore counties. They testified that their concerns are largely rooted in fears that the DJS does not have adequate resources to appropriately handle all of Maryland's justice-involved young people.

Catharine Rosenblatt, a Baltimore City juvenile prosecutor, said the bill as proposed "will place additional burdens on an already overtaxed agency," referring to the DJS.

Annie Moylan, a Post-UMD poll respondent who lives in Glen Burnie, said she considers 14 to be old enough for someone accused of a serious crime to know right from wrong.

"You can't be a 14-year-old kid and say you're going to start all over again," said Moylan, a stay-at-home mother in her mid-40s. "It's too late."

Black Maryland voters were more likely to say teens accused of assault should be treated as adults than White Maryland voters (65 percent vs. 56 percent), while similar majorities of both supported charging teens as adults for the other crimes, the poll found.

Charging teens as adults has substantial support among registered Democrats, with majorities saying teens accused of murder, illegal gun possession, assault and carjacking should be treated the same as adults, with even larger shares of Republicans saying the same.

In murder cases, Maryland voters across all age groups were about equally likely to say teens should be treated as adults. But for illegal gun possession and assault, larger majorities of voters 65 and older said teens should be treated as adults compared with those under 30. For carjacking, about 8 in 10 voters 65 and older said teens should be treated as adults, compared with just over 4 in 10 of those under 30.

George Clack, 78, said he views murder as a crime in a league of its own, calling it "the crime that can't be undone."

"From what I read in the newspapers, I think it seems as if there have been quite a number of heinous crimes committed by people, we'll call it in the 14-to-18-year-old age category," said Clack, a retired State Department employee who lives in Columbia.

Both Clark and Alejandra Baier, 20, another poll respondent, struck a more conciliatory tone about crimes such as illegal gun possession, assault and carjackings.

A confluence of factors may lead children to carry out crimes or be implicated in them, they both said.

"They might not have parental support to assist in good decision-making," said Baier, a Baltimore resident. "I don't feel like they have the prefrontal cortex to commit these crimes and know what they're doing."

The Post-UMD poll was conducted by telephone Jan. 24-28 by The Post and the University of Maryland's Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement among 1,002 registered Maryland voters randomly sampled from a statewide voter database. Sixty-three percent of interviews were reached by live callers to cellphones, 16 percent on landlines, and 21 percent were completed online via a text invitation. Overall results have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.3 percentage points.

OBITUARIES

TOM BEAUCHAMP, 85

A leading voice on modern bioethics



COURTESY OF GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY'S KENNEDY INSTITUTE OF ETHICS

Tom Beauchamp was a philosopher and Georgetown professor.

BY BRIAN MURPHY

Tom Beauchamp, a philosopher and ethicist who helped codify boundaries on medical research involving human trials and sought to strengthen protocols on animal testing to recognize moral concerns such as pain and cognition, died Feb. 19 at a hospital in Washington. He was 85.

The cause was complications from a pulmonary embolism, said his son, Zack Beauchamp.

A Georgetown University professor, Dr. Beauchamp pursued work that encompassed scholarship as a leading expert on the 18th-century Scottish philosopher David Hume and the rule-defining discipline of applied ethics.

In a career-shaping moment in 1978, Dr. Beauchamp (pronounced Beech-am) was called to put his studies — and his own views — into practice as part of a landmark treatise on American medical research that effectively set the framework for the modern field of bioethics.

The Belmont Report, with Dr. Beauchamp as the lead writer, summarized years of debate by scientists, lawyers and others in a special panel authorized by Congress in 1974. The group — known as the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research — was a cornerstone of legislative action prompted by disclosures of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, in which officials at the U.S. Public Health Service and other agencies had denied hundreds of impoverished Black men treatment for syphilis for decades to study the disease's ravages on the body.

Dr. Beauchamp was brought in after the commission crafted a broad set of principles — "respect for persons, justice and beneficence" — during meetings that included sessions at the Belmont Conference Center in Elkridge, Maryland.

"I said, 'And exactly what does the commission mean by these principles?'" Dr. Beauchamp recalled asking Michael Yesley, the commission's staff director. "And his answer was, 'I think they're looking to you to tell them that.'"

The report was adopted by U.S. agencies and was widely considered one of the foundations for bioethics, including guidelines for informed consent and the creation of independent committees to review research plans. "That word [bioethics] had just barely come into use," Dr. Beauchamp recounted in a 2016 interview at Columbia University.

Before the Belmont Report, medical ethics was largely set by standards under the Declaration of Helsinki, drafted in part as a repudiation of the abuses and deaths by Nazi doctors conducting experiments on Jewish prisoners and others.

Dr. Beauchamp "is a key figure in the foundation of the entire field of bioethics," said Arthur Caplan, a professor of bioethics at the New York University Grossman School of Medicine. "No one else was as instrumental in creating the basic principles of American bioethics."

Dr. Beauchamp expanded on the Belmont Report in the book "Principles of Biomedical Ethics" (1979), co-written with philosopher and theologian James F. Childress, in what was regarded as another seminal text in the field. Dr. Beauchamp and Childress spelled out the ethical duties of physicians and other health-care workers with their patients.

With medical advances such as gene therapy, Dr. Beauchamp became increasingly outspoken on the need for greater oversight as more research moved into private biotech companies.

"The highest levels of uncertainty often attend the most inventive and untested work," Dr. Beauchamp and his wife, bioethicist Ruth Faden, wrote in an essay in

the Baltimore Sun in March 2000. "Some must bear these risks that science and society ultimately benefit. ... Practical import is that we owe those who assume risk of harm for our benefit a system of protections free of 'serious deficiencies.'"

He developed similar tenets around medical research using animals, building on views about human morality toward animals by Australian philosopher Peter Singer in the 1970s.

Dr. Beauchamp's books, such as "Principles of Animal Research Ethics" (2020), co-written with philosopher David DeGrazia, sought to address the added ethical complications of conducting tests on creatures incapable of giving consent or articulating their concerns.

Dr. Beauchamp acknowledged that animal testing was sometimes crucial for studies on new drugs and other medical innovations. However, he urged researchers to be mindful of pain thresholds for animals and recognize that primates and other species are aware of what they are experiencing.

He also encouraged more efforts to seek alternatives such as computer modeling or lab-grown cells. "Finally, there should be an upper limit to how much we can harm animals, regardless of the benefits of the science," Dr. Beauchamp told Science magazine. "No animal should be put in a position of experiencing severe suffering for a lengthy period of time."

Tom Lamar Beauchamp III was born in Austin on Dec. 2, 1939. His father was an insurance company executive, and his mother tended to the home.

Inspired by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and others in the civil rights movement, he began religious studies as a source for social change — receiving a bachelor's degree in theology and philosophy from Southern Methodist University in 1963 and a bachelor of divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1970. He also earned a doctorate in philosophy that same year from Johns Hopkins University.

"So, I had a dilemma: go into religious studies or to go into philosophy. And I chose to do something that was in between," he said in the Columbia interview.

He joined the Georgetown faculty in the early 1970s and later took an added position as senior research scholar at the university's Kennedy Institute of Ethics. He retired in 2016.

His works on Hume include "Hume and the Problem of Causation" (1981), co-written with philosophy scholar Alexander Rosenberg, and he was editor of "The Critical Edition of the Works of David Hume" (1999). Dr. Beauchamp's other books include "A History and Theory of Informed Consent," (1986) co-written with Faden, and "The Human Use of Animals" (1998), co-written with ethicist F. Barbara Orlans and others.

Survivors include Faden, his wife of 45 years; two children, Zack Beauchamp and Karine Fiore; and six grandchildren.

NASA once sought Mr. Beauchamp's views on the use of animals in spaceflight research — a practice revived by the Soviet Union in the 1980s under an international program called Bion that used rhesus monkeys, rats, reptiles and other animals for medical tests in zero gravity.

Some of the animals did not survive the missions. The work by Mr. Beauchamp at NASA helped inform the space agency's Sundowner Report in 1996, which set stricter standards for animal welfare in NASA studies by declaring that "vertebrate animals are sentient" and that minimizing pain and distress for animals was a "moral imperative."

"So, what started off looking pretty grim, winds up with something pretty good," Dr. Beauchamp said. "That was my one success."

MARYLAND

Mother sentenced to 21 years for child neglect

BY DAN MORSE

A Maryland woman who isolated her seven minor children inside a squalid Montgomery County townhouse, where one of them wasted away to 79 pounds and died, was sentenced to 21 years in prison Thursday.

"They were sheltered, abused, raised in trauma," Circuit Judge Jill Cummins told Cynthia Moore as the 42-year-old stood before her, leaning on a cane.

Moore had been convicted at an earlier trial of six counts of child neglect. Her children were largely cut off from the outside world in the middle of one of the most prosperous counties in the Washington region. Moore ostensibly home-schooled her children but didn't teach them, Cummins said. Dog and cat feces covered the floors. Moore kept the refrigerator door locked. The children were discouraged from seeking friends and had not been taught how to bathe, according to testimony during the trial.

"Your children have suffered at your hands," the judge told her Thursday.

Moore had faced up to 30 years on the charges. Her attorneys had sought 10 years, while prosecutors asked for 25. Among the arguments made by the latter: Because

Maryland parole rules classify child neglect as a nonviolent crime, Moore will be eligible for parole consideration after serving 25 percent of her sentence.

At her trial, which Moore had elected be held before Cummins and not a jury, the judge found her not guilty of the most serious charge she faced: second-degree murder related to the death of the 17-year-old, Morgan. Prosecutors had argued that Moore caused his death by keeping him from getting medical care as he slowly died.

But Cummins said their case was not supported by Maryland law. Citing testimony from two physicians who could not determine a definitive cause of Morgan's death, Cummins said prosecutors hadn't established the essential element of "causation" in the case.

Moore, her husband, Dominique, and the children lived in a townhouse in the county's Montgomery Village area. Cynthia Moore took primary responsibility for how the children were raised, Cummins said. Three of Moore's 10 children were adults at the time of Morgan's death.

In November, Dominique Moore pleaded guilty to six counts of child neglect. Cummins also will decide his fate, at a hearing set for March 27. "You had a partner in this as well," the judge told Cynthia

Moore in court, "and I will deal with him when he comes before me for sentencing."

The case broke open on May 10, 2022, when police and paramedics were called to the Moores' townhouse about an unresponsive 17-year-old. They tried but couldn't revive Morgan. They also came face to face with the condition of the home and all of the children living there.

"It took the death of one of your 10 children to bring light into that very dark home," Cummins told Cynthia Moore on Thursday. "To see what was going on and to remove those children."

The six surviving minor children were placed into foster homes in pairs and had to learn hygiene skills, according to trial testimony. They enrolled in schools and had to adjust to interacting with the outside world. The nine surviving siblings still see one another.

Several of them testified during Moore's trial, delivering heartbreaking accounts of suffering and perseverance.

"They're trying their best to be resilient, and they're trying to figure out a way to handle the trauma and move on," Montgomery Assistant State's Attorney Sheila Bagheri said Thursday. "And luckily they are very close with one another."



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DEATH NOTICE
EMDEN

STUART BERNARD EMDEN
Stuart Bernard Emden, of Columbia, Maryland, passed away on Saturday, March 1, 2025, at the age of 72. He is survived by his beloved wife, Ronni Emden (nee Feuer); and loving children, Sara Emden, and Jonathan Emden. He was predeceased by his caring parents, Sydney and Frances Emden. He was in the wine field for many years, an avid reader, chess player and loved his fantasy baseball league. Services at Garden of Remembrance Memorial Park, 14321 Comus Road, Clarksburg, MD 20871, on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 12 p.m. Please check Levinson's website for shiva information.
www.sollievintonson.com



DEATH NOTICE
WEISSENBORN



COLLEEN KELLEY WEISSENBORN
Colleen Kelley Weissenborn, 76, of Alexandria, VA, passed away peacefully on February 16, 2025, with her loving family by her side. Born in El Paso, TX, on November 5, 1948, to the late Donald E. and Patricia (O'Brien) Weissenborn. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Gerry Coan, brother Brien Weissenborn, and siblings-in-law Carl Coan (Pat), Patsy Fitzmaurice (Frank), Ralph Coan, Joan Schumacher (John), Tom McCarthy, and Mary Josephine Coan. Kelley is survived by her daughter Katie Coan; sisters Casey Finn (Pat), Tina Villeneuve (Wayne), Moira McCormick (Rich), sisters-in-law Linda Weissenborn, Jessica Coan, Cathy McCarthy, brothers-in-law Tom Coan (Mary), John Coan (Debbie); and multiple generations of loving nieces and nephews. Visitation will be held on Thursday, March 6, 2025, 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m., at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home, 1500 W Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA. Funeral Mass will be held on Friday, March 7, 2025, 11 a.m., at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 1427 W Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA.

WIXTED

JOHN FRANCIS WIXTED "Jack"
11/11/1933 - 2/20/2025
John Francis Wixted ("Jack"), 91 of Charlotte, NC, passed away February 20, 2025. Born November 11, 1933, he was the son of the late John J. Wixted and Marie Parker Wixted. Survivors include his nephews, Mark (Jody) and Paul Majewsky; and his niece Annemarie McAllister (Joseph).

Jack served proudly in the US Army and held a long career as a budget analyst for the Department of Defense. He lived in Burke, VA for most of his life and had a passion for music and backpacking.

A special thank you to the staff and residents of Merrywood on Park in Charlotte. The exceptional care they provided allowed Jack to remain active and engaged while living independently.

Thank you also to the team at Carolinas Palliative Care and Hospice Group at Atrium Health Mercy, Via Healthcare Partners, and Visiting Angels. The dedication of these teams allowed Jack a peaceful transition in his home environment.

Mass of Christian Burial will take place 12 p.m., Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, 375 Lumen Christie Ln., Salisbury, NC 28147.

Interment will follow at Salisbury National Cemetery, Salisbury, NC



DEATH NOTICE
LANE

ROLAND ALPHONSO LANE (Age 89)
On February 27, 2025 of Takoma Park, MD. Beloved husband of the late Ingetraud Lane; father of Joan Lane-Warfield (Carroll), Rachel Lane-Behroozfard (Masoud), Carol Lane-Borden (Wallace), Roland Lane, Jr. (Michelle), and Tammy Lane, grandfather of Carroll Jr., Michael (Jackie) and Lucas Warfield, Inge (Shahrad) and Armond Behroozfard, Wallace Jr., Sebastian and Preston Borden, and Amielia, Amanda and Tiffany Lane. Brother to Douglas and Vivian Frazier. Services to be held at Takoma Baptist Church (635 Aspen St NW, Washington, DC 20012) on Thursday, March 13, 2025. Wake will be held at 10 a.m. with the funeral service to follow at 11 a.m. Burial at Arlington National Cemetery (at a later date).

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

DEATH NOTICE
MCNAUGHER



LESLIE ANN (SHERWIN) MCNAUGHER
November 13, 1942 – February 10, 2025

Leslie McNaugher left this world on February 10, after a long, sad slog into dementia. She was 82 years old, and until dementia overtook her she was a gentle, gracious and beautiful lady with an infectious laugh and a warm smile that made everyone around her happier. She was the loving mother of two sons, Ian and Robb McNaugher, and a loving and supportive step-mother to Heather, her husband's daughter from his first marriage. And she was a competent, low-key academic manager much loved by those who

worked for her. Leslie Sherwin was born and raised in Brattleboro, Vermont, where she acquired a solid sense of self, loads of common sense, and great skill on the ski slopes. After graduating from Brattleboro Union High School in 1960 she entered Oberlin College, majoring in French, graduating in 1964. She then traveled to San Francisco to become an administrator at the University of California's medical school in that city. There she met her first husband, Robert W. Clirehugh, whom she married in 1968 but who died, tragically, in Vietnam soon after they were married. She returned to New England to take up administrative roles at Harvard's Business School starting in 1970. In 1974 she became the Registrar of the Kennedy School of Government, where she met Tom McNaugher, returning to Harvard after several years in the Army to work on his PhD. They were married in 1977, and enjoyed nearly 48 years together, moving first to Santa Monica, California before settling into their home in McLean, Virginia. Leslie is survived by her husband, Tom; her sons, Ian and Robb, her step-daughter, Heather; three wonderful grandsons, Douglas, Samuel, and Braxton; two Vermont-based brothers, Douglas and Charles. We'll celebrate Leslie's life in a memorial service on April 12 at the Church of the Redeemer, 6201 Dunrobbin Drive, Bethesda, MD. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Redeemer would be most welcome.

THOMAS



EILEEN MCCORMICK THOMAS "Nana" (Age 80)

Eileen McCormick Thomas of Fairfax, VA passed away unexpectedly on February 17, 2025, due to an acute medical condition. She had spent the day surrounded by her family. Eileen was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend to many. She was born on July 25, 1944 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Eileen was grateful for the opportunity to travel the world with her family through her father's career in the Air Force. She especially loved the time they spent in England and Texas. After graduating from high school in Utah, she moved to Washington, DC to work at the Pentagon. Eileen met her husband Phil in 1965 in Arlington, VA while he was on a weekend pass

from his post as a Navy Chaplain's Assistant. They fell in love and married the following year. Eileen and Phil settled in Falls Church, VA where they raised their four children. Eileen was very active in St. James Church, both in the music ministry and as co-chair of the refugee resettlement committee. She worked as an instructional assistant with special education students in Falls Church City Schools and as a preschool teacher, both of which were her true calling. In 2002, Eileen and her husband relocated to Fairfax, VA to be closer to their children. Eileen possessed a gift for music and a voice that uplifted the hearts of all who heard it. She was known for her boundless compassion and generosity to those in need. Eileen exhibited unconditional love to family and friends alike. She enjoyed nature, art, theater, family gatherings and especially doing crafts with her grandchildren. Eileen was deeply committed to her family and her presence in the lives of those who knew her will be greatly missed. Eileen is survived by her husband of 58 years, Phillip Thomas; her four children, Christina Ferrari (Steve), Patrick Thomas (Connie), Emily Guckenberger (Lance) and Nicholas Thomas (Donna); 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A memorial visitation will be held at Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home, Friday, March 21 from 4 to 7 p.m. Celebration of life, Saturday, March 22 at 10 a.m., St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Eileen's name to a humanitarian organization of your choice. <https://www.fairfaxmemorialfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Eileen-M-Thomas?obid=37449094>

DREWRY



JANE TARVER DREWRY
Jane Tarver Drewry, 76, of Charlottesville, Virginia, died peacefully on October 9, 2024, at home, surrounded by her family. Born March 3, 1948, in Bainbridge, Georgia, she was the daughter of Jack Phillips Tarver and Vallie Weaver Tarver. She was preceded in death by her father and mother, and her two older brothers, Russell Phillips Tarver and William Sydney Tarver. During Jane's childhood, Jack designed and built dams for the Army Corps of Engineers in small towns throughout the South, where Jane was able to foster her great love of horseback riding. After school, she would ride horses with friends like most kids ride bikes. For college, Jane moved to the outskirts of Atlanta to attend Agnes Scott. A gifted writer and storyteller, Jane was an award-winning journalist before returning to Hollins College to earn an MFA in support of her long desire to write fiction. She was selected to attend the prestigious Breadloaf

Writers Conference at Middlebury College to further hone her craft. Jane went on to pen three novels. In October 1970, Jane met Chauncy Drewry on a blind date at a UVA football game, and they hit it off immediately. At the time, Jane worked in Lynchburg, Virginia, and Chauncy was a student at Jorden. Chivalrous by learning, yet pragmatic by nature, Chauncy asked Jane to meet him exactly halfway between Charlottesville and Lynchburg for each of their ensuing dates. Jane fell in love with him anyway. They were engaged by Christmas and married the following year, on May 8, 1971. Jane and Chauncy were married for 53 wonderful years. Over those five decades, they lived together in six homes and one tiny trailer (as Chauncy finished graduate school), and raised three beloved sons and two hay dogs. Jane was a devoted and loving wife and mother, always encouraging, supportive, and there for Chauncy and her three boys when they needed her. In her early 30s, Jane was diagnosed with a rare eye disease that progressed to blindness. Her visual impairment revealed and cultivated an unusual bravery, resilience and grace, which were well complemented by keen senses of humor and fun. Taken together, these traits drew people to Jane, resulting in lifelong friendships wherever she went, from Martinsville to Alexandria, on her numerous travels throughout the U.S. and abroad, and to Smith Mountain Lake and Charlottesville. Jane is survived by her husband, Arthur Chauncy Drewry, Jr.; her son, Arthur Chauncy "Shag" Drewry III, and his wife, Adele; her son, Stuart Phillips Drewry and his fiancée Lisa; her son, Douglas McNair Drewry, and his wife, Gillian; and her four grandchildren, Ramsey, Thea, Beau and McCoy Drewry. No service planned.

VON BLASINGAME



ODÍS VON BLASINGAME JR.
Odís von Blasingame Jr. was born on September 6, 1948, at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, DC. He was the first born of four children to Odís von Blasingame Sr. and Georgetown Day Childress-von Blasingame. Odís attended Hawthorne High School in Washington, DC. He later received his Bachelor degree in Political Science from Coe College. Odís pursued graduate studies at Howard University where he was awarded a Master's Degree in Urban Planning. He remained an active member of the Coe College and Howard University Alumni Associations throughout his life.

After graduating from Howard University, Odís found his professional calling in sales. He moved to New York and worked as a Sales Executive for the Metropolitan Opera. He later worked as a Sales Executive for the New York Daily News for twenty-six years. At the Daily News, he was awarded Salesperson of the year six times. Odís believed in serving the community and throughout his professional career supported several small businesses in Harlem. He was honored to receive the Harlem Outstanding

Service Award from the Harlem Chamber of Commerce. Odís lived a full life. As a child he played the clarinet, tennis and was a passionate photographer. During the summers, he loved to swim and worked as a lifeguard at the Takoma Pool later rising to become the pool manager. Odís continued his love of these hobbies throughout his life and added cooking and travel. He was always looking to create a new adventure with his family and they traveled extensively throughout the United States and abroad. Spending time with his family was Odís biggest joy! Their laughter, cooking together, traveling and numerous conversations about their lives and the world have created beautiful memories.

A longtime resident of the Upper West Side, Odís is survived by his wife of 47 years, Gwendolyn Greene Von Blasingame; daughters Kara Von Blasingame-Sène (Jacquès) Sasha Von Blasingame; grandson Kai; sisters Beryl von Blasingame-Gantt, his tri-birthday twin, Gail Blasingame-Scott (Bill); brother William von Blasingame (Michele) and numerous relatives and friends.

Odís passed away on January 18, 2025 from complications of Parkinson's disease. He enjoyed life to the fullest and lived a life worth living. He will be deeply missed by all.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family requests that donations in the name of Odís Von Blasingame be given to the Uptown Grand Central in Harlem, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming East 125th street into a thriving corridor through the planting of trees and flowers, the support of local businesses and street festivals and providing naturally grown produce to residents through its Farmstand.

A Memorial Service will be held on March 8, 2025 at 12 noon at Unity Funeral Home, 2352 Frederick Douglas Blvd New York, New York.

DEATH NOTICE

DEATH NOTICE

BORGER

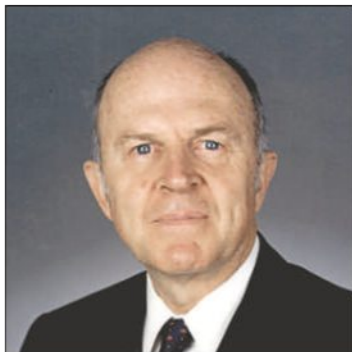


GERALDINE DONNELLY BORGER

On February 24, 2025, Gerry Borger died in the presence of her family after nearly a decade long struggle with Alzheimer's at the age of 77. A native Washingtonian, Gerry attended Blessed Sacrament Grammar School, graduated from Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School and earned a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University where she majored in business. After graduation, she married Tom Borger in 1969 and began their 56 years of marriage by traveling to various duty stations compliments of

the United States Marine Corps. Gerry and Tom had met in kindergarten. Returning to Washington, DC, Gerry began a career in banking. After the birth of her children, Marc and Geri, Gerry commenced a 30 year career in volunteer service. With incredible energy, organizational and leadership skills, she tirelessly devoted herself to the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International, The Woods Academy in Bethesda, MD and The Hexagon Club of Washington, DC for which served as President and was honored with a Presidential Award for Volunteerism from President Reagan. She continued throughout her life to be a very active Visitation alumnus and remained very close to her dear Visi friends. Gerry is survived by her husband, G. Thomas Borger, her son Marc Borger (Marcy), her daughter Geri Urgo (Daniel), six siblings, Joseph Donnelly (Alice), Joan Donnelly Hirschert (Fritz), John Donnelly (Nancy), James Donnelly (Mary Beth), Joyce Donnelly, and Janet Donnelly Keller (Don), four grandchildren, McKenna Borger, George Borger, Cole Urgo and Kayla Urgo plus a vast number of nieces and nephews and their innumerable children and her dear cousin, Kay Warren Biondi (Dave). Funeral mass will be held at 11 a.m. on March 4, 2025 at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 3630 Quesada St., NW, Washington, DC. Visitation will begin at 10 a.m. in lieu of flowers, donations to the Foundation Fighting Blindness would be appreciated: donate.fightingblindness.org.

DAVIS



ALLEN CLAYTON DAVIS
August 23, 1927 – February 17, 2025

Allen Clayton Davis, of Alexandria, Virginia, passed away peacefully in his home on Monday, February 17, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Born in Glencliff, Tennessee, on August 23, 1927, to Floyd Spencer Davis and Mildred Grace (Lee) Davis, Allen led a life marked by service, diplomacy, and a deep appreciation for art and nature.

Allen began his journey as a Naval aviator, earning his wings in 1949 and serving as a navigator and patrol plane pilot across the globe, from Norfolk, Virginia, to Port Lyautey, Morocco. His military career transitioned into a distinguished 30-year tenure with the U.S. Foreign Service, where his expertise and leadership focused on African Affairs. He served as the United States Ambassador to Guinea (1980-1983) and Uganda (1983-1985). He also held pivotal roles as African Affairs Advisor to the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Political Adviser to the Deputy Commander in Chief of the United States European Command in Stuttgart, Germany.

Allen's diplomatic career was underscored by his commitment to fostering international relations and understanding. Fluent in

French and Russian, he navigated complex political landscapes with wisdom and integrity, earning the respect of his colleagues and the communities he served. In 1985, he and the members of the U.S. Embassy at Kampala received a Superior Honor Award for their exceptional service.

Allen's educational journey was as impressive as his career. He graduated from Smyrna High School in 1945 and briefly attended Middle Tennessee State College before joining the U.S. Navy. He pursued further education at Duke University, George Washington University, and Georgetown University, where he earned his Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service in 1956. A lifelong learner, Allen was also a graduate of the Army War College in 1974.

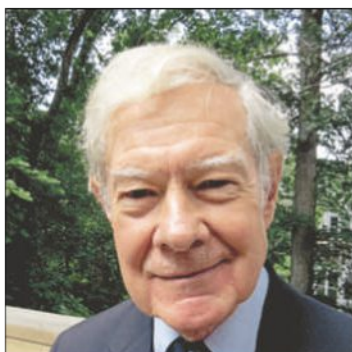
A passionate collector of African art, Allen found beauty and meaning in the cultures he encountered throughout his life. His love of art was matched only by his appreciation for nature and gardening, pursuits he joyfully shared with his beloved wife, Barbara.

A man of honor, service, and heart, Allen Clayton Davis leaves behind a legacy of dedication to his country, his family, and the world. He will be remembered not only as a diplomat and a veteran but also as a man who embraced life with curiosity, generosity, and unwavering love.

Allen is survived by his devoted wife, Barbara; his children, John (and wife Karin), Anne (and partner Jim Elliott), and Philip (and wife Lisa); and his seven cherished grandchildren: Katelynn, Montgomery, Christopher, Elysée, Alexandra, Lara, and Mark. His legacy of wisdom, humor, and love will be carried on through his family and all who were fortunate enough to know him.

A celebration of Allen's life will be held at a later date in Alexandria, Virginia. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations to be made in his memory to organizations supporting diplomacy, cultural exchange, or environmental conservation.

BANTA



HENRY MAURICE BANTA
Henry Maurice Banta of Washington, DC passed away on December 29, 2024 one day short of his 87th birthday.

Henry moved to the DC area to attend Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. After graduation he spent two years serving in the US Army and was stationed

in Korea. He then returned to Washington to attend Georgetown University School of Law. Henry subsequently worked as an antitrust attorney initially with the Federal Trade Commission and the US Senate. He was a partner of the DC law firm of Lobel, Novins & Lamont for over 40 years. He was a frequent contributor to several publications including Nieman's Watchdog and Tax Notes.

Henry was an avid bicyclist and a member of the local racing team NCVC. He was a competitive racer at both the local and national level. One of his proudest moments cycling was riding with Lance Armstrong while he was racing for the US Postal Service team. Lance Armstrong once complimented Henry for his bike handling skills.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years Caroline, his sister Mary Ann, his children Maureen and Matthew, and his grandchildren Madeline, Babbinn and Saran.

A Catholic Funeral will be held Friday, March 14, 2025 at 11 a.m. in the morning at The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 3630 Quesada St NW, Washington, DC 20015. A reception will follow the service in the Parish Center.

DEATH NOTICES

INFO & RATES FOR DEATH NOTICES

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sundays & Federal Holidays SELF-SERVICE ONLY	6"+ for ALL Black & White notices \$160 each additional inch Mon - Sat \$191 each additional inch Sunday
Monday - Saturday Color 3" - \$670 4" - \$725 5" - \$885	
Sunday Color 3" - \$710 4" - \$810 5" - \$985 6"+ for daily Color notices \$268 each additional inch Mon-Sat \$299 each additional inch Sunday	
Current 2025 Rates: (PER DAY) Monday - Saturday Black & White 3" - \$525 4" - \$575 5" - \$725	Notices with photos begin at 3" (All photos add 2" to your notice.)
Sunday Black & White 3" - \$580 4" - \$610 5" - \$790	ONLINE ONLY NOTICES Daily 4" ONLY - \$445
ALL NOTICES MUST BE PREPAID All Paid Death Notices appear on our website through www.legacy.com	
The Washington Post	

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

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The Washington Post

THE WEATHER


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Another chilly morning

 You'll want to layer up in the morning, with lows in the 20s and 30s. Temperatures will rise to the low to mid-40s for afternoon highs. Sunshine and light winds may make this the most tranquil day of the workweek. At night, a high-pressure system will keep skies fairly clear and winds limited. Lows will be near 30 for most of us.

Today

Sunny



46° 34°

FEELS*: 47°


CHNCE PRECIP: 0%

WIND: WNW 6-12 mph

HUMIDITY: Low

Tuesday

Turning cloudy



58° 50°

FEELS: 53°


P: 5%

W: S 8-16 mph

H: Low

Wednesday

A shower and t-storm



64° 44°

FEELS: 60°


P: 95%

W: S 12-25 mph

H: High

Thursday

Breezy and cooler



51° 36°

FEELS: 43°

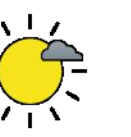
P: 5%

W: WNW 12-25 mph

H: Low

Friday

Mostly sunny



57° 40°

FEELS: 53°


P: 0%

W: W 8-16 mph

H: Low

Saturday

Mostly cloudy



61° 35°

FEELS: 60°

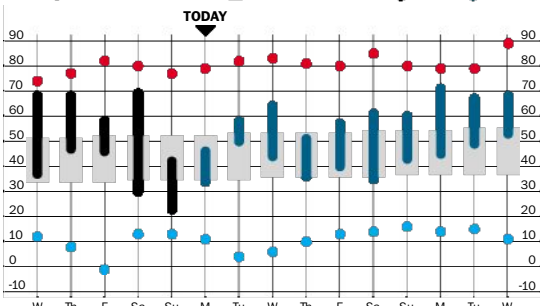
P: 25%

W: WNW 6-12 mph

H: Moderate

OFFICIAL RECORD

Temperatures

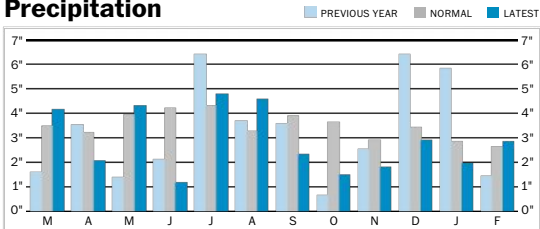


Statistics through 5 p.m. Sunday

	National	Dulles	BWI
High	42° 3:35 p.m.	40° 3:59 p.m.	39° 3:59 p.m.
Low	23° 7:00 a.m.	21° 7:08 a.m.	20° 7:00 a.m.
Normal	52°/35°	50°/30°	50°/30°
Record high	77° 1972	77° 1972	80° 1972
Record low	13° 1925	12° 1967	13° 1980


Difference from 30-yr. avg. (National): this month: -2.3° yr. to date: -1.3°

Precipitation



	National	Dulles	BWI
Past 24 hours	0.00"	0.00"	0.00"
Total this month	0.00"	0.00"	0.00"
Normal	0.20"	0.20"	0.24"
Total this year	4.79"	4.42"	3.90"
Normal	5.68"	5.75"	6.22"
Snow, past 24 hours	0.0"	0.0"	0.0"
Snow, season total	14.9"	15.5"	12.7"

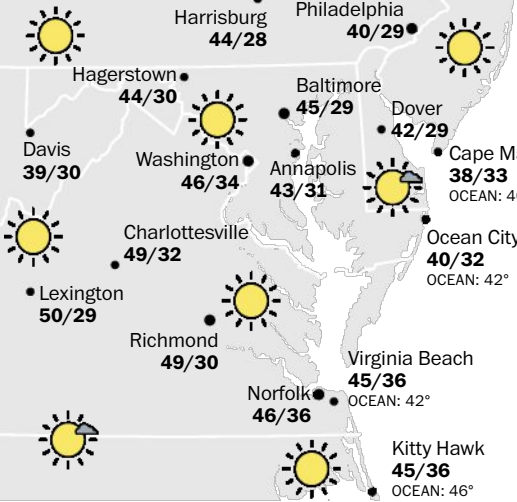
Moon Phases



Solar system

	Rise	Set
Sun	6:37 a.m.	6:03 p.m.
Moon	8:28 a.m.	10:49 p.m.
Venus	7:10 a.m.	8:28 p.m.
Mars	1:05 p.m.	4:14 a.m.
Jupiter	10:45 a.m.	1:22 a.m.
Saturn	7:05 a.m.	6:36 p.m.

REGION



Pollen: High

Grass Low
Trees High
Weeds Low
Mold Low

Air Quality: Moderate

Dominant cause: Nitrogen oxide

UV: Moderate

4 out of 11+

Blue Ridge: Today, mostly sunny; cold in central parts. High 33 to 39. Winds west 8-16 mph. Tonight, increasing cloudiness in central parts; clear elsewhere. Low 31 to 35. Winds southwest 7-14 mph. Tuesday, mostly cloudy, not as cold. High 43 to 47.

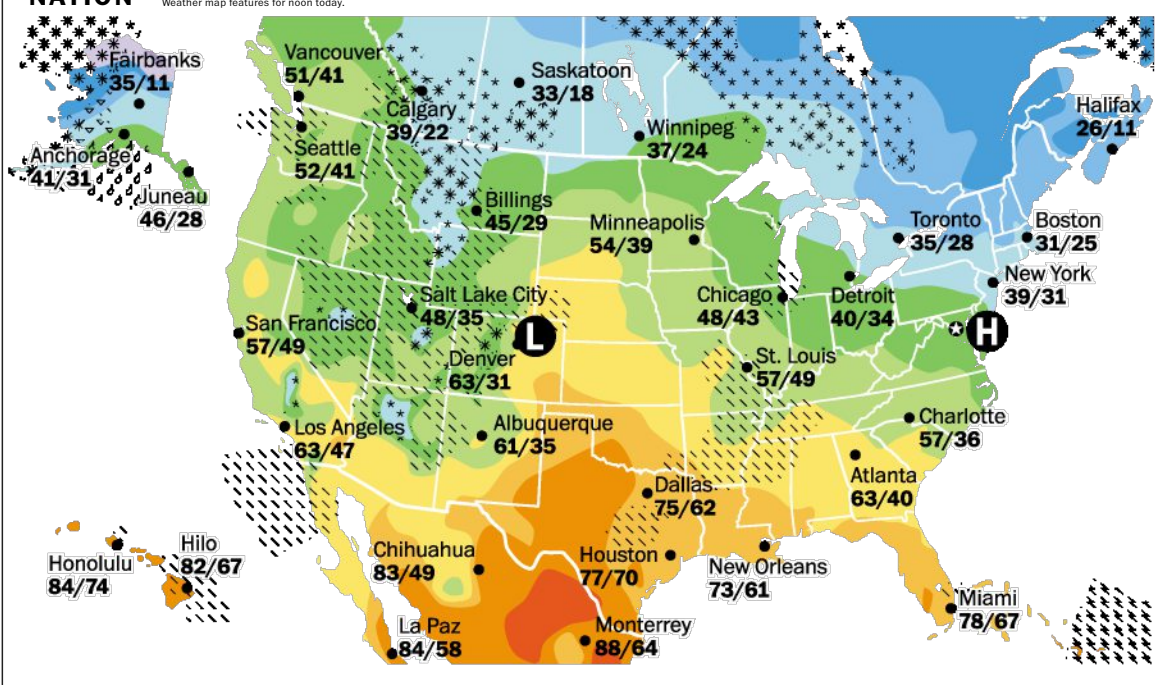
Atlantic beaches: Today, plenty of sun; cold. High 37 to 46. Winds northwest 7-14 mph. Tonight, clear. Low 29 to 36. Winds south-southwest 6-12 mph. Tuesday, mostly cloudy; milder. High 50 to 63. Winds south 12-25 mph. Wednesday, a shower, thunderstorm.

Waterways: *Upper Potomac River:* Today, sunshine. Wind west 4-8 knots. Waves less than a foot. Visibility generally clear. • *Lower Potomac and Chesapeake Bay:* Today, sunny. Wind northwest 6-12 knots. Waves 0-1 foot on the Lower Potomac; 1-2 feet on the Chesapeake Bay. • *River Stages:* The stage at Little Falls will be around 3.70 feet today, with no change of 3.70 Tuesday. Flood stage at Little Falls is 10 feet.

Today's tides (High tides in **Bold**)

	Washington	Annapolis	Ocean City	Norfolk	Point Lookout
4:55 a.m.		1:11 a.m.	3:48 a.m.	5:48 a.m.	3:27 a.m.
10:15 a.m.		7:36 a.m.	9:51 a.m.	11:51 a.m.	10:24 a.m.
5:41 p.m.		2:05 p.m.	4:01 p.m.	5:53 p.m.	3:48 p.m.
10:52 p.m.		7:48 p.m.	10:18 p.m.	none	9:56 p.m.

NATION



Yesterday's National

High: Camarillo Springs, TX 91°
Low: Land o' Lakes, WI -14°
for the 48 contiguous states

World

High: Birdsville, Australia 114°
Low: Delyankir, Russia -60°
excludes Antarctica

NATIONAL	Today	Tomorrow
Albany, NY	31/19/s	44/38/c
Albuquerque	61/35/c	57/32/c
Anchorage	41/31/c	40/33/s
Atlanta	63/40/c	70/55/c
Austin	77/62/c	80/52/t
Baltimore	45/29/s	59/45/c
Billings, MT	45/29/c	37/26/s
Birmingham	66/48/c	75/56/c
Bismarck, ND	53/28/c	36/21/s
Boise	54/33/c	55/34/c
Boston	31/25/s	47/37/c
Buffalo	34/27/s	44/40/c
Burlington, VT	22/17/s	37/35/c
Charleston, SC	61/43/c	71/61/c
Charleston, WV	50/33/c	62/53/c
Charlotte	57/36/c	65/57/c
Cheyenne, WY	54/27/sh	35/24/s
Chicago	48/43/c	51/45/r
Cincinnati	47/38/c	56/51/sh
Cleveland	42/35/s	54/46/c
Dallas	75/62/c	74/46/t
Denver	63/31/c	41/23/s
Des Moines	58/41/c	53/31/r
Detroit	40/34/c	48/42/r
El Paso	76/44/c	64/40/c
Fairbanks, AK	35/11/s	38/16/s
Fargo, ND	52/30/s	37/20/s
Hartford, CT	34/22/s	48/38/c
Honolulu	84/74/sh	85/72/sh
Houston	77/70/sh	77/52/t
Indianapolis	47/40/c	55/50/sh
Jackson, MS	70/55/c	73/51/t
Jacksonville, FL	67/47/c	77/63/c
Kansas City, MO	57/52/c	60/31/r
Las Vegas	62/46/c	66/49/s
Little Rock	59/56/c	68/46/t
Los Angeles	63/47/s	64/49/s
Los Angeles	63/47/s	64/49/s
Louisville	54/46/c	63/55/s
Memphis	62/55/c	64/48/t
Miami	78/67/s	79/72/sh
Milwaukee	43/38/c	47/38/r
Minneapolis	54/39/c	49/30/s
Nashville	61/48/c	66/54/c
New Orleans	73/61/c	77/59/t
New York City	39/31/s	52/45/c
Norfolk	46/36/s	63/54/c
Oklahoma City	72/54/c	68/35/t
Omaha	57/42/c	54/24/r
Orlando	75/57/c	78/62/c
Philadelphia	40/29/s	55/44/c
Phoenix	67/48/c	71/50/s
Pittsburgh	43/33/s	57/45/c
Portland, ME	25/16/s	41/33/c
Portland, OR	54/43/c	53/41/r
Providence, RI	33/21/s	45/39/c
Raleigh, NC	56/35/s	65/55/c
Reno, NV	54/31/c	55/34/c
Richmond	49/30/s	62/51/c
Sacramento	60/43/c	60/44/c
St. Louis	57/49/c	60/41/t
St. Thomas, VI	86/75/s	85/74/sh
Salt Lake City	48/35/c	48/37/sh
San Diego	60/53/c	63/53/s
San Francisco	57/49/c	57/49/c
San Juan, PR	88/75/c	85/73/sh
Seattle	52/41/c	51/42/sh
Spokane, WA	47/36/s	48/33/c
Syracuse	31/22/c	43/39/c
Tampa	77/59/s	80/65/c
Wichita	61/51/c	61/31/t
World	Today	Tomorrow
Addis Ababa	81/56/c	82/57/s
Amsterdam	49/32/c	51/38/c
Athens	58/46/c	54/46/c
Auckland	79/61/c	77/61/c
Baghdad	68/43/c	72/55/c
Bangkok	98/81/c	98/80/c
Beijing	49/27/c	49/24/c
Berlin	50/32/s	51/35/c
Bogota	66/51/r	66/51/r
Brussels	50/30/c	53/35/c
Buenos Aires	81/75/t	84/78/t
Cairo	74/54/c	71/54/s
Caracas	75/64/s	73/62/s
Copenhagen	46/40/c	47/41/c
Dakar	72/64/c	71/64/c
Dublin	53/43/c	55/44/c
Edinburgh	53/46/c	54/50/c
Frankfurt	52/30/c	54/28/c
Geneva	50/30/c	52/31/c
Ham., Bermuda	63/54/sh	61/55/c
Helsinki	41/34/c	40/30/c
Ho Chi Minh City	96/77/c	95/77/c
Hong Kong	77/68/c	73/64/t
Islamabad	58/47/t	66/44/s
Istanbul	47/39/c	50/39/c
Jerusalem	66/46/c	63/44/c
Johannesburg	76/59/t	78/57/r
Kabul	43/18/s	39/24/s
Kingston, Jam.	88/76/sh	88/75/c
Kolkata	92/73/c	91/72/s
Kyiv	40/32/c	46/36/c
Lagos	91/81/t	91/80/t
Lima	82/70/c	81/70/c
Lisbon	58/48/sh	65/51/s
London	52/33/c	54/35/c
Madrid	51/43/r	57/44/sh
Manila	93/78/c	93/78/t
Mexico City	81/56/s	82/54/c
Montreal	20/16/c	37/33/s
Moscow	37/33/c	38/32/c
Mumbai	96/74/c	96/67/c
Nairobi	85/62/c	85/62/s
New Delhi	83/64/s	82/54/c
Oslo	52/37/t	49/38/c
Ottawa	24/19/c	36/32/s
Paris	51/32/c	53/32/c
Prague	48/26/c	52/28/c
Rio de Janeiro	87/74/sh	86/74/s
Riyadh	72/51/s	70/55/c
Rome	61/40/s	61/39/s
San Salvador	90/66/s	86/64/sh
Santiago	86/54/s	87/55/s
Sanjievu	50/26/s	54/28/s
Seoul	41/29/s	40/29/s
Shanghai	51/46/r	49/44/c
Singapore	90/77/r	90/78/t
Stockholm	46/37/c	43/36/c
Sydney	76/70/c	77/69/sh
Taipei City	89/69/c	77/60/t
Tehran	44/34/c	49/43/c
Tokyo	50/37/r	45/36/r
Toronto	35/28/c	40/36/i
Vienna	50/27/s	55/31/c
Warsaw	46/34/c	48/37/s

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INSPIRED LIFE

Sharing wishes for 100th birthdays

BY SYDNEY PAGE AND CATHY FREE

In their weekly chat on Thursday, Inspired Life writers Cathy Free and Sydney Page asked readers to share what they would wish for their birthday if they live to be 100 years old. Here is an edited excerpt.

Cathy Free: Today's topic about living to age 100 reminded me of my great-grandmother, who lived to be 103. About a year before she died, she knitted me an afghan with several loose ends and holes, due to her failing eyesight. It's now one of my most treasured possessions. As for my own 100th birthday plans (if I'm so lucky), I'd like to rent out my favorite Italian restaurant and invite family and friends for a night of nonstop pasta and prosecco. I did the same thing for my 50th birthday, so why not?

Sydney Page: This topic is perfect timing, as I just wrote a piece about the importance of staying busy for longevity. I spoke with several inspiring centenarians who continue to work and/or volunteer, and they say it's helped them reach 100 and beyond. If I'm lucky enough to get to 100, I hope I'm still able to write, because I really love what I do.

Martha Daly: My mom turned 100 last month. She and my father were beloved physicians in a small town in Michigan. She is still fairly healthy and lives independently in a senior housing development about 30 miles away. We celebrated by renting out the town theater and showing "The Wizard of Oz." Guests showed up in costumes. Three hundred people attended, and another 300 sent cards and good wishes. If I lived to be 100, I would want to know that my life mattered and that people cared about me.

Free: Happy 100th Birthday to your mom, Martha! How wonderful that she and your father were doctors. I also love your birthday party idea. The theater looks like the perfect location to show "The Wizard of Oz." Were there any flying monkeys? I agree with your 100th birthday thoughts, and it sounds as though you're well on your way to achieving that wish. The birthday party you held for your mom speaks volumes.

AJ4: Family. I would wish for

Readers hope for family, dogs, cake and more if they reach centennials

my husband and all our children and grandchildren and beyond to be there. We would celebrate outdoors somewhere near a creek or other water so we could all put our chairs in and soak our feet in the flowing water. Dogs would be welcome. Oh, and chocolate cake with thick chocolate frosting.

Free: I love this idea! Am I invited? :) Dogs, a cool creek and a chocolate cake with thick chocolate frosting. What could be better?

Dee dee: Dogs. I want to be around dogs and play with them and snuggle with them all day. Then I wish for a peaceful, pain-free death.

Page: That's the dream! Robert Moore — a man in San Jose — wished to pet dogs for his 100th birthday, and his family organized a dog parade where hundreds of pups lined up for a quick snuggle with the birthday boy. It's one of my favorite stories I've ever written, and it's still one of The Washington Post's top-liked Instagram posts!

Reader: Wouldn't everyone wish to be free of dementia? That is the plague diminishing the quality of life of so many at that advanced age, and that of the loved ones who care for them.

Free: I agree that would be a wonderful gift. My father had dementia, and it was heart-wrenching to watch him decline. My heart goes out to anyone experiencing the same "long goodbye" with a loved one.

Jeff: What do I want for my 100th birthday? Another 100.

Free: Me too! That's not asking for too much, is it?

Sidney: I just turned 70. My birthday is on Christmas Eve. I have never had a birthday party on my birthday. Since becoming an adult, I rarely have had any celebration at all. If I live to be 100, I hope my kids get together and have a party for me. I want it to be at the zoo: cake, silly party hats, presents to open, and all of that kid stuff. I'd want ALL of my family there.

Free: Why wait until 100? Your

family should throw you a party THIS year. I insist! My neighbor across the street was born on Christmas Day, and she always has an open house and invites everyone. She does all of the cooking, and everyone is welcome to drop by for appetizers and drinks. If your family doesn't have a party on your actual birthday, maybe you could start your own tradition! By the way, your 100th birthday party idea sounds terrific.

Reader: If I live to be 100, I wish that my dear husband, who is four years my senior, is there with me to help blow out the candles!!

Page: I love that wish! I wish that for you, too. I wrote a story a few months ago about a couple who married at age 96 and 98. The story really reinforces the power of love and partnership. All the best to you and your husband!

Steve: To have my wife and three sons alive and healthy. I don't want to be here if they're not.

Page: Family over everything! I live by that mantra, too.

J. Hart: "To cease upon the midnight with no pain." From "Ode to a Nightingale," by John Keats. I'm 93 and in good health and spirits. 100 would be more than enough.

Page: Thanks for sharing that poignant quote, J. Hart. I think a lot of people would agree that their wish is to pass peacefully and without pain. To many more years of good health and happiness for you!

Steven: I wish for a full-fat carrot cake on the 100th birthday.

Free: What's stopping you from enjoying it now? I say go for it on every birthday! Yeah!

Reader: My aunt wanted a party where everyone would come, have a good meal, and tell stories of her life. But she was deaf, so she wanted everyone to come to her and talk to her individually so they could chat.

Free: I love that everyone had their own one-on-one 100th birthday conversation with your aunt. That was something they'll always remember, and it sounds like a super special day for the birthday girl, too. ?? >p>

Join our next Optimist Hour chat on Thursday at 2 p.m. Eastern time by going to [washingtonpost.com/community](https://www.washingtonpost.com/community).

THE 97TH ACADEMY AWARDS

BEST PICTURE
"Anora"

DIRECTOR
Sean Baker
"Anora"

BEST ACTRESS
Mikey Madison
"Anora"

BEST ACTOR
Adrien Brody
"The Brutalist"

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
Zoe Saldana
"Emilia Pérez"

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
Kieran Culkin
"A Real Pain"



KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES



CARLOS BARRIA/REUTERS



KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

‘ANORA’S’ BIG NIGHT

The comedy-drama film takes home five statuettes, including best actress for Mikey Madison and four wins for producer-writer-director-editor Sean Baker

Complete list of winners, more photos on **C2**

TOP LEFT: Adrien Brody won the Oscar for best actor for his performance in “The Brutalist,” his first since winning for “The Pianist” at the 2003 ceremony.

TOP RIGHT: Mikey Madison accepts the Oscar for best actress for her performance in “Anora,” which also won best picture, best director and two other awards.

ABOVE: The cast and crew of “Anora,” including producer-director Sean Baker, holding the statuette, accept the award for best picture.



‘MTV UNPLUGGED’
Some of the raw performances are now on Paramount Plus. **c4**

CAROLYN HAX
In-laws didn’t offer condolences when my father died. **c3**

‘PARADISE’
Could the TV show’s mega disaster happen in real life? **c5**

MUSIC REVIEW

Brian Ganz throws Chopin a 215th birthday party to remember

BY MICHAEL ANDOR BRODEUR

The longest applause came at the very beginning Friday night at Strathmore — where pianist Brian Ganz threw a lively birthday party for his spiritual bestie, Chopin.

After a tumultuous day in Washington capped by a fiery exchange between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that had the whole lobby buzzing, Polish Embassy official Adam Krzywosadzki delivered brief but moving opening remarks, earning a standing ovation after he called attention to “our Ukrainian friends.” Krzywosadzki also suggested that

Chopin’s music was essential to Poland’s culture of “resilience, courage and pursuit of freedom” in the face of oppression.

Cultural diplomacy set the stage, but once Ganz took his place at the Steinway, the vibe segued into a spirited celebration of Chopin’s 215th. With “Happy Birthday, Fryderyk!” — and, yes, Ganz stuck to a proper Polish spelling — the pianist reaches the penultimate chapter in his National Philharmonic-sponsored quest to perform the complete works of Chopin, however long it takes.

Or, 15 years to be precise. Ganz’s first installment came in 2011, and he’ll wrap things up with a grand finale next season. Friday’s concert was sold out, and for

good reason. This isn’t just a project that has dominated Ganz’s performance career; it’s also a good time.

That said, there was a sense throughout the program that this party was partly in service of addressing some loose ends. We opened with a confectionary set of “Four Mazurkas” (Op. 68) — a little jewel box of miniatures posthumously published in 1855, studded with evidence of Chopin’s harmonic invention and Ganz’s interpretive sensitivity.

The quizzical trills and soft segues of the A-minor No. 2 were impressionistically rendered and intimately conveyed, like little secrets being shared. And the lyrical tenderness of the F-major No. 3

highlighted a spirit of discovery that animates Ganz’s playing. (If there were lapses in elegance, they were more than made up for by his obvious affection.)

Do I mention that not a single measure of this lovely piece went unsullied by coughing? I do.

And, actually, let me pull over for a second. I get it: Everyone coughs. But it seems uniquely reserved to the classical concert hall that *everyone coughs*. Have you folks ever heard of lozenges? They’re great — they help keep you from coughing at inopportune times, or constantly.

Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas once flung cough drops at an audience in

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At Oscars, taking some time to shine

No sooner had host Conan O'Brien ended his monologue during Sunday night's 97th Academy Awards show with a song-and-dance number that pledged to *not* waste Oscar viewers' time than the first award presenter, Robert Downey Jr., walked out and spent several minutes effusing about each nominee for best supporting actor. (Kieran Culkin won, for "A Real Pain.")

What seemed like an indulgent ad-lib from Downey turned out to be a sometimes excruciating new format for some categories, in which plenty was said about nominees as a lead-in to each award, paying the way to further fawning in the acceptance speeches. Whatever happened to the quiet notion of "it's an honor just to be nominated?" It seemed an odd choice by the show's producers, who each year are tasked with the challenge of keeping viewers of Hollywood's biggest night awake and engaged, having moved the show up an hour last year in a renewed effort to keep it brisk. We don't mean to harp on clock-watching, but hey, O'Brien promised!

The pace picked up a bit in the second hour when two presenters — Amy Poehler (who made a best adapted screenplay joke about phone adapters) and Daryl Hannah (who shouted the "Slava Ukraini!" battle cry before bestowing the best editing Oscar) — brought back the memory of efficiently entertaining award shows.

That's not to say the show didn't have several impressive moments, including an opening tribute to the fire-ravaged spirit of Los Angeles, blending musical selections from "The Wizard of Oz," "The Wiz" and "Wicked" in resolute honor to the place the film industry calls home. The show contained other honorary segments — to L.A. firefighters, to Agent 007 James Bond, to late producer-composer Quincy Jones, to recently deceased acting legend Gene Hackman, and to all those dearly departed who made it to the vaunted "In Memoriam" reel. It always takes time for Hollywood to feel it has properly saluted everyone.

— Hank Stuever

For complete coverage from Sunday's red-carpet arrivals, ceremony and more, visit [washingtonpost.com/style](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style)



CHRIS PIZZELLO/INVISION/AP



PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES



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AL SEIB/THE ACADEMY/GETTY IMAGES

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Oscars host Conan O'Brien, center, performs at the awards show on Sunday.

From left, Basel Adra, Rachel Szor, Hamdan Ballal and Yuval Abraham accept the Oscar for documentary feature for "No Other Land."

Mick Jagger and Camille Dalmays backstage at the Oscars.

Cynthia Erivo, left, and Ariana Grande perform during the show's opening.

Paul Tazewell accepts the Oscar for best costume design for "Wicked."

WINNERS

And the Oscars went to ... here are the winners of Sunday's Academy Awards.

- BEST PICTURE**
"Anora"
- BEST ACTRESS**
Mikey Madison, "Anora"
- BEST ACTOR**
Adrien Brody, "The Brutalist"
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**
Zoe Saldaña, "Emilia Pérez"
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**
Kieran Culkin, "A Real Pain"

- BEST DIRECTOR**
Sean Baker, "Anora"
- BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**
"Anora"
- BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY**
"Conclave"
- BEST ANIMATED FILM**
"Flow"
- BEST INTERNATIONAL FILM**
"I'm Still Here," Brazil
- BEST ORIGINAL SONG**
"El Mal" from "Emilia Pérez"



FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kieran Culkin poses with the Oscar he won for **best supporting actor** for "A Real Pain." This was his first Oscar win.

- BEST ORIGINAL SCORE**
"The Brutalist"
- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY**
"The Brutalist"
- BEST FILM EDITING**
"Anora"
- BEST VISUAL EFFECTS**
"Dune: Part Two"
- BEST SOUND**
"Dune: Part Two"
- BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**
"No Other Land"
- BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN**
"Wicked"
- BEST MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING**
"The Substance"
- BEST COSTUME DESIGN**
"Wicked"
- BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT FILM**
"I'm Not a Robot"
- BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM**
"The Only Girl in the Orchestra"
- BEST ANIMATED SHORT FILM**
"In the Shadow of the Cypress"

— Staff and wire reports

Ganz’s penultimate chapter on Chopin

MUSIC REVIEW FROM C1

Chicago — and he was *guest* conducting. Such concert venues as Carnegie Hall and the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg have in recent years partnered with companies like Ricola to supply free cough drops to patrons. I plan to come with pocketfuls in the future, but my experience at Strathmore suggested we might need something a little more potent. (Fisherman’s Friend, perhaps?) More than once, the hall sounded like an unusually capacious urgent care.

Okay, back to the party, which rounded the corner of the first half with a series of singularities: Chopin’s only piece for flute and piano (the “Variations on a Theme by Rossini”); his sole work for four-handed piano (the “Variations in D Major on a National Air by Thomas Moore”); and his lone composition for two pianos (the “Rondo for Two Pianos,” Op. 73). Tucked in there, we also heard Chopin’s sparkling contribution to Franz Liszt’s “Hexaméron,” the Variation No. 6 — a showcase of the “singing” quality of his writing (and the influence of Bellini, whose “I puritani” provides the theme).

Julietta Curenton, the acting principal flute of the National Philharmonic, joined Ganz for the Rossini variation — which borrows from “Non più mesta,” the finale of “La Cenerentola.” It sat unpublished until 1953 and serves as an example of Chopin’s youthful wit and subtle wickedness. He probably composed it for his amateur flautist father, and

Wise and well-prepared concertgoers will book their tickets early for next season’s closing stretch of Brian Ganz’s musical odyssey — a grand finale you can tell he’s already thinking about.

you get the sense he may have been sticking it to Dad. Curenton was well equipped to handle its bounding acrobatics and quickening staccato figuration (often as percussive as a piano). Even at comic speeds, the two kept the young troublemaker’s disarming charms intact.

Pianist Alon Goldstein — who, like Ganz, studied with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Institute — appeared for the four-handed “Variations” and the two-piano “Rondo.” Ganz dedicated the “Variations” to his Neapolitan nonna, Elvira Magnolia, pointing to Naples as the source of the piece’s melody. Composed in 1826, lost until 1964 and incomplete until Chopin scholar Jan Ekier’s intuitive repairs, it felt surprisingly sturdy in the hands of the two players. Goldstein laid a rhythmic foundation that Ganz



JAY MALLIN

Pianist Brian Ganz, pictured, was joined by flautist Julietta Curenton and pianist Alon Goldstein for a celebration of Chopin.

festooned with airy decoration. It was tart, fizzy and friendly, with little punch lines of silence that gave the audience a giggle.

The “Rondo” was also a satisfying romp, with Ganz shifting to a wheeled-out Yamaha (brighter, wetter) and his conversation with Goldstein extending across a greater timbral distance. Chopin composed it at 18, but didn’t publish it until later in life (hence the Op. 74 designation) — possibly because it’s more than a little showy. In this piece and in a show-closing encore — the third movement of Chopin’s sonata for cello and piano — the two men

were led by Chopin but linked in friendship. Even its most maudlin moments felt lightened.

The second half of the program was devoted to a loose end that Ganz felt compelled to defend. The “bad rap” given to the composer’s first sonata (Op. 4) was enough to warrant remarks from Ganz, who acknowledged the work as one of Chopin’s “least respected” offerings. And, to be sure, there’s an emotional vacancy to the sonata that can only be papered over with well-intentioned intensity.

Ganz leaned into that latter part, offering a deeply invested

reading that tried its hardest to retrofit the sonata with the confidence the composer may have lacked at the ripe old age of 17 — a promising technician, but not quite a poet. The sweetness of the third movement, “Larghetto,” made the whole thing worthwhile, and Ganz delivered the combustible finale he promised at the outset — busy with quicksilver runs and explosive punctuation.

Ganz blew out the candles for the evening with a cobbled-together fusion of Chopin’s Étude Op. 25, No. 1 (known as the “Aeolian Harp” étude) with a good

old-fashioned “Happy Birthday” — or, as Ganz re-titled it, “An Aeolian Harpy Birthday.” (Ever put a song on just to clear the party out?)

Wise and well-prepared concertgoers will book their tickets early for next season’s closing stretch of Ganz’s musical odyssey — a grand finale you can tell he’s already thinking about.

“When the end of a journey is in sight,” he said from the stage, “it can be a reminder to be more mindful, more present, to savor every note.”

That’s advice you can keep in your pocket. (Cough, cough.)

Angie Stone, R&B singer from the Sequence, killed in Alabama car crash

BY SAMANTHA CHERY

Angie Stone, the Grammy-nominated R&B singer-songwriter who rose to fame in the late 1970s as “Angie B” in the hip-hop trio the Sequence, died in a car crash Saturday morning. She was 63.

Stone was leaving a performance in Montgomery, Alabama, with a band member driving when the accident occurred, her publicist, Deborah R. Champagne, told The Washington Post. She was the only person in the car who died.

The veteran entertainer was scheduled to perform a show later in the day at the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Basketball Tournament in Baltimore, Champagne added. The game instead included a moment of silence in her honor.

Stone formed the Sequence

with her fellow Columbia, South Carolina, natives: Cheryl Cook (known as “Cheryl the Pearl”) and Gwendolyn “Blondy” Chisolm. They became the first female hip-hop trio to be signed to Sugar Hill Records, a label founded by Sylvia and Joe Robinson and named after a Harlem neighborhood.

The group’s most popular tune, “Funk You Up” from 1979, has been sampled in numerous hit songs, including in Dr. Dre’s 1995 track “Keep Their Heads Ringin.” Stone was also featured in Erykah Badu’s “Love of My Life Worldwide,” a semi remake of the song.

In the 1990s, Stone became the lead singer of the R&B group Vertical Hold, alongside Willie Bruno II and David Bright. The members released two albums with hits including “Seems You’re Much Too Busy” and “Matter of Time.”

In the 2000s and 2010s, she established a critically acclaimed solo career and, as a Post album review put it, a “silky, sample-heavy brand of neo-soul.” From 1999 to 2023, she released 10 albums, peaking in the top 15 with songs including “Wish I Didn’t Miss You,” “I Ain’t Hearin’ U” and “Do What U Gotta Do.”

Stone was nominated for three Grammys: for “More Than a Woman” from her second album, “Mahogany Soul”; for “U-Haul” off her third album, “Stone Love”; and for “Baby,” from her fourth album, “The Art of Love & War.”

She was also known for her acting roles, appearing in films “The Hot Chick” (2002) and “The Fighting Temptations” (2003), as well as making her Broadway debut in “Chicago” in 2003.

She also found success as a

songwriter, penning music for artists such as her former partner, D’Angelo, and the Sugarhill Gang. She was inducted into the Women Songwriters Hall of Fame last year.

Champagne said Stone was a friend and like a sister to her, and she called Stone a “prodigy” and a “brilliant storyteller.”

“She would just tell me stories that I would be like, ‘my mouth would drop. I’d be like, ‘Oh my God, really?’” Champagne said. “She transported you there. That’s the kind of talent she was.”

Stone had two children, Michael and Diamond, and two grandchildren.

Her daughter, Diamond, shared the news of her mother’s death on Facebook, saying “My mommy is gone” with a string of crying emojis Saturday afternoon.



LEAH MILLIS/REUTERS

Angie Stone performs in Detroit in August 2018.

In-laws never offered condolences when dad died



Carolyn Hax is away. The following first appeared Jan. 12, 2011.

Carolyn Hax

Hi, Carolyn: My dad died last November of a heart attack. My husband’s parents and siblings have never said one word to me to acknowledge his passing. About two weeks after he died, they all came to our house to celebrate my husband’s birthday, and no one said anything to me. It was very weird.

Then we spent Christmas with them, and again, nothing. I have been with my husband for 10 years and have shared many of their milestones with them, happy and sad. I thought this had at least earned me the socially appropriate amount of sympathy.

After I realized none of them were ever going to say anything, I really felt like they just didn’t

care. I told my husband — not in an angry, accusing way — that it really hurt my feelings, that I couldn’t understand it and that I just couldn’t let it go. His response was to ask whether I wanted him to say anything to them (of course not) and then to act annoyed with me that I had brought it up.

How can I reconcile this hurtful oversight with the fact that I am going to be spending significant amounts of time with them for the rest of my life?

— Virginia

Virginia: Seems to me your husband himself gave you a window into his family’s nonresponse.

To his mind, apparently, the only reason for mentioning your hard feelings was to ask him to take action on your behalf — right? He asked what you wanted him to do about it, and when you declined his offer to take action, he got annoyed.

That’s an unusual enough reaction to warrant attention. Specifically: He had several possible responses available to him that would have cost him nothing and would have eased your mind. “I’m sorry they let you down,” or even the dour but useful, “That’s just the way they are.” How tough is that?

So. Does this sound familiar? Your husband’s family had several possible responses to your father’s death that would have cost them nothing and would have eased your mind. “I’m sorry for your loss,” “I heard about your dad, how are you doing?” How tough is that?

Answer: very tough, if sympathetic words are not in this family’s emotional lexicon (around death). Given the way families work, his insensitivity and his family’s insensitivity on the same topic are enough to warrant at least some consideration that you’ve got a pattern on your hands.

Start with your history with

your husband and mentally page through it for other evidence, unrelated to your father’s death, that your husband is strangely or just quietly absent when opportunities for spoken solace arise.

Then move to your history with his family, and page through that.

This could all be a fantastic theory, embroidered with the slim thread of your husband’s annoyance. However, it’s also possible that it took this profound loss for you to notice — to feel personally affected by — a trait that your husband and in-laws exhibited all along.

Dealing with that is a whole other journey. However, if being grief-avoidant is indeed a family trait, then there’s something else you can be sure it isn’t: personal. “These people are weird” sounds a lot easier to live with than “Wow, these people are mean.”

Write to Carolyn Hax at



ILLUSTRATION BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

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.

Why do people post about intimate details online?

Miss Manners

JUDITH MARTIN, JACOBINA MARTIN AND NICHOLAS IVOR MARTIN

Dear Miss Manners: Why do people, especially celebrities, feel the need to post their intimate details for all to read?

One female celeb posted

about her partner’s performance in bed and how good he was at it. Another posted about how bad her ex was. Does the public need to know this information?

Those who post continuously don’t understand that social media is the downfall of many relationships.

Why, indeed, does everyone — celebrated or just hoping to be — feel the need to post everything about their lives?

We claim to care about our privacy. We hate it when we expect people to admire us, and instead they attack us. Yet we keep feeding each other material.

Celebrities did not always do this. They had press agents to spread favorable stories and, when necessary, quash unfavorable ones. The assumption was that they led blameless domestic lives, unless they made public scenes or landed in court. The idea was to

boost their careers by making them seem relatable and likable.

Surprisingly, this approach often worked: Not everyone had a camera with which to catch them behaving badly, and the press was less aggressive. But now, bland narratives no longer titillate the public. Failings are often forgiven, but virtue is suspicious — not to mention boring.

Noncelebrities follow famous people’s lead, in the hopes of becoming celebrities themselves. Or because they hold the now-common belief that the unpublished life is not worth living.

Now, Miss Manners has a question for you: Why are you reading this stuff?

Dear Miss Manners: I have become something of an auction junkie, and I am surprised at how often I see incomplete sets of sterling flatware for sale. Often, the “set” is just dinner forks and several sizes of spoons; sometimes it’s only knives, or only coffee spoons, etc.

I’m confused by the incompleteness of place settings and the fact that this was apparently how they were collected. Did people

entertaining with “the good silver” mix utensil designs freely?

Odd! I see it too often for it not to be “a thing!”

You probably have a garbage disposal. You may or may not have children. But those are the two most likely places where missing pieces go.

True, the garbage disposal doesn’t actually eat silver, but it can mangle anything it catches. And the original silver owners’ descendants may not actually use silver, but sets are often split up when they inherit it.

The possessors of incomplete sets may have supplemented them with pieces from other incomplete sets, perhaps inherited from another side of

the family. Or, like you, maybe they went scavenging at auctions and other venues selling odd pieces.

Miss Manners feels obliged to point out that you, as an auction junkie, benefit from this chaos. Buying a complete set would be a one-time pleasure, but if you buy an incomplete one, you can have a lifetime of sport in tracking down the missing items.

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.

How realistic is the world-ending disaster event featured in Hulu’s ‘Paradise’?

BY KASHA PATEL
AND HELENA ANDREWS-DYER

This article contains major spoilers for Episode 7 and the season so far of “Paradise” on Hulu.

For a show called “Paradise,” the series is long from idyllic so far.

The storyline begins with the assassination of a wisecracking, whiskey-fueled president. It appears like a whodunit case, but a shocking twist reveals the show’s characters are all living in a postapocalyptic world. Much to the viewers’ pleasure, this narrative has more bumps than that mountain they’re living under.

In the latest episode, we learn what pushed them to move underground. It’s a supervolcanic explosion. And a tsunami. And perhaps the beginnings of nuclear war. And probably some other disasters we missed in the chaos. It definitely makes for thrilling television.

“The human condition is that we’re obsessed with mortality,” said Dan Fogelman, the show’s creator. “Mortality looms large over our lives as humans. And the mortality of the world? It doesn’t get any bigger than that. It keeps you on the edge of your seat.”

As Fogelman and his writers create their end-of-world disaster scenario, we’re exploring what these might look like in real life. Here are some of the most glaring science questions that emerge in the latest episode, and how scientists and real-life instances can answer them.

What would trigger a global tsunami?

In the show, a “supervolcano” erupts under the Antarctic ice sheet, triggering a global tsunami that sends 300-foot waves around the planet. Coastal cities are wiped away as the tsunami ping-pongs from Antarctica to the North Pole at nearly 600 miles an hour. Anything under 300 feet above sea level was supposedly inundated.

It’s a tall order to create a 300-foot-high tsunami wave, although it has been done in real life, said earth scientist Sam Purkis. It’s all about the “efficiency of the explosion,” he said.

Water is heavy to move, so the force would need to be very large to move the initial mass of water.

In 2022, the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai undersea volcano erupted and created waves as high as 280 feet (85 meters) at the center of its blast. The strength of that eruption, Purkis and his colleagues estimated, was as much as 15 megatons — roughly equivalent to about 15 million tons of TNT or the largest nuclear test performed by the United States.

The Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai volcano, Purkis said, was at the ideal depth that it could displace a good amount of water. While waves locally were very high, the tsunami traveled as far as Peru, and waves at that point lessened to about a meter or two high. Still, even the smaller waves were deadly.

“Making tsunami with explosions is not a very efficient process,” said Purkis, a researcher at the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric and Earth Science.

And a volcano in Antarctica wouldn’t create a tsunami, either, because it’s on land, he said. There’s no water to displace.

Instead, he said a tsunami could develop in one of two ways in this hypothetical TV scene.

First, the volcano could displace ice that tumbles into the ocean, with the shaking triggering an underwater landslide, which would be very effective at producing a tsunami. (In the episode, the explosion does appear to trigger ice shelves to shatter.)

A similar real-life event happened in 1964 in Alaska. A magnitude-9.2 earthquake — one of the largest on record — triggered a massive underwater landslide, which generated a deadly tsunami with wave heights over 220 feet (67 meters) locally. The waves traveled as far as Mexico, Chile and New Zealand, but were closer to 3 feet (1 meter) high at those more distant locations.

Second, Purkis said, the large explosion could set up a pressure wave in the atmosphere that pushes down on the water like a hammer. This method allows tsunamis to jump ocean basins. After the Tonga volcano eruption, Purkis detected a tsunami in Miami because of those atmospheric pressure waves — but it was minuscule, on the scale of millimeters.

But there is at least one real-life example that produced very high tsunami waves even far away from the source: the dino-



President Cal Bradford, center, played by James Marsden, in the latest episode of Hulu’s “Paradise.”

saur-killing asteroid.

When the 8.7-mile-wide Chicxulub asteroid hit, ejected material pushed a wall of water from the impact site. It created a tsunami wave around the globe that was tens of thousands of times more energetic than tsunamis caused by any earthquake today. Simulations estimated that a nearly mile-high tsunami wave propagated in a ring shape across the ocean in every direction.

So if you want a global tsunami event, it might take a densely packed, 2 quadrillion-pound asteroid hitting Earth. Though at that point, Purkis said, “the tsunami is the least of your problems.”

“There’s a whole list of crises that you’re facing.”

Are supervolcanoes real? What would an eruption look like?

The show refers to both a “supervolcano” and a “massive mega-caldora,” though scientists say neither are official scientific terms. The show’s eruption appears to set off a cascade of disasters, most notably the previously mentioned tsunami, and its fictitious scientists say the eruption unfolded much faster than they anticipated. They were supposed to have at least 10 days to prepare after initial rumbles.

While supervolcanoes aren’t

an official classification, supervolcanic explosions are real and have global effects. Super eruptions have notably occurred at the Yellowstone volcanic system as recently as 630,000 years ago; in Campi Flegrei, in present-day Italy, about 39,000 years ago; and in present-day Sumatra, Indonesia, about 74,000 years ago.

A volcano has a super eruption when it expels at least 1,000 cubic kilometers (240 cubic miles) of material in the air. The ash, which can be carried long distances by the wind, is particularly concerning because it can cause respiratory issues. The eruptions also emit much more sulfur dioxide, which reflects sunlight back into space and can lower global temperatures.

“These aren’t necessarily end-of-the-world scenarios, but they definitely are high-impact and far-reaching,” said Jamie Farrell, chief seismologist at the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory and researcher at University of Utah. He said the global impacts are “mostly due to the changing climate.”

These eruptions, which occur from volcanoes on land, are particularly powerful because of the silica-rich magma underneath them. The silica-rich magma is very sticky and hard to move, making it difficult for gases to escape to the surface. The trapped gas builds pressure until

it’s finally depressurized and explodes violently — like opening a can of soda after shaking it.

Antarctica has a few volcanoes, but none has produced a mega eruption, Farrell said. But he speculated a large eruption under the ice sheet would melt a lot of ice, causing sea levels to rise. Like Purkis, he also wasn’t sure how a supervolcanic eruption in that location would trigger such a big tsunami.

Scientists probably would know about a super eruption in advance because of the slow movement of magma — perhaps even weeks to months ahead of time. At Yellowstone, Farrell and his colleagues monitor seismic activity, deformations in the ground, and the quantity and types of gases coming out of the ground. All three of those probably would change in the lead-up to a large eruption at Yellowstone.

Of course, Farrell said, they don’t know for sure because they have never recorded a supervolcanic eruption at Yellowstone on their current monitoring system.

If an eruption were to occur today, he said, “there’s really not much you can do to mitigate it, except for warning the public, evacuating local areas.”

Could humankind survive these events?

In the wake of unprecedented historical natural disasters, sci-

entists have found clues on how people have adapted and survived.

After the supervolcanic eruption about 74,000 years ago, scientists found evidence of humans shifting their diet — eating more fish instead of hunting mammals. They also learned to survive in very arid conditions.

Although the 2022 Tonga volcano eruption took lives, the death toll was much lower than in other past massive volcanic eruptions. Purkis said the difference could be chalked up to a better response, awareness of the impending danger and having fewer tourists around because of the pandemic.

In the show, it wasn’t just the natural disasters that drove people to a manufactured paradise. It was ultimately the actions of other humans.

Fogelman and the “Paradise” production team consulted several scientists when cooking up their theory for how the world would end. It would involve a cascading series of events, starting with a climate catastrophe, a lack of communication among nations, the breakdown of global politics, a resource grab and then nuclear war.

“We had very morbid conversations at the very beginning on this project,” Fogelman said. All the experts consulted on the project laid out some version of the same scenario: “It would be a domino effect of bad decisions by human beings.”

The show’s gloomier apocalyptic themes are a little odd for Fogelman, who called himself an optimist by nature and is someone who continues “to believe people are inherently good, not bad.”

Fogelman also worked closely with a science writer about the environmental aspects of the plot. He said this particular writer, who was working on a book about the climate crisis, had some “inklings of hope” in the last decade. Fogelman said he planned to highlight some of “the good stuff” in subsequent seasons of the show.

“There are reasons to be hopeful right now. They can just really be hard to see,” Fogelman said. “I’m in the same morbid state of dread that we’re all in. But I say over and over again that people are good and we’re very smart, and we’re going to figure this stuff out before anything truly terrible happens.”

Sheriff: Actor probably died days before being found

BY BEN BRASCH

Data from the pacemaker of Oscar-winning actor Gene Hackman suggests he probably died nine days before investigators discovered his body and that of his wife in their Santa Fe, New Mexico, home, officials said Friday.

Hackman, 95, and Betsy Arakawa, 65, were found dead Wednesday in different rooms. Both bodies showed signs of decomposition, according to an affidavit filed Thursday and obtained by The Washington Post.

Hackman’s pacemaker — a battery-powered device that helps regulate heart rhythm — indicated that his last cardiac activity was Feb. 17, Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza said at a news conference Friday.

A forensic pathologist has ruled out carbon monoxide poi-

soning as the cause of the couple’s deaths, Mendoza said, but neither the cause nor the manner has been determined. Autopsy and toxicology results could take “three months or longer” to be completed, Mendoza added.

Officials have said there were no signs of foul play in the deaths of Arakawa and Hackman.

Hackman’s movie roles embodied life’s characters — from the relatable everyman to a wicked villain. His Hollywood work spanned decades, encompassing an Oscar-winning depiction of a New York police detective in 1971’s “The French Connection” and a role as the patriarch of an eccentric family in 2001’s “The Royal Tenenbaums.”

After the deaths of Hackman and Arakawa, investigators carried out a search warrant at their home and took two green cell-

phones, two bottles of medication, a bottle of Tylenol, medical records and a 2025 monthly planner, Mendoza said Friday. He declined to specify the type of medication or to whom it belonged.

Law enforcement plans to review data from the cellphones to piece together a timeline of the last days of the fiercely private couple, Mendoza said.

Neighborhood security found Hackman and Arakawa on Wednesday after a worker who had arrived at the two-story home for maintenance said no one answered the door, the sheriff’s office said in a news release. The security officers saw the couple’s bodies through a window and called 911.

When sheriff’s deputies arrived, Mendoza said, the front door of the home was open. In a bathroom just inside, the deputies found Arakawa’s body on the

ground with a black space heater near her head, the affidavit says. Pills and an open, orange prescription bottle, the document says, were scattered across the countertop.

Officers then found Hackman’s body on the floor of a mudroom with a walking cane and a pair of sunglasses nearby, the affidavit says. Hackman appeared to have “suddenly fallen,” a sheriff’s detective wrote in the affidavit.

Deputies discovered the body of a German shepherd in a bathroom closet about 10 to 15 feet from Arakawa’s body, according to the affidavit. They also found two living dogs on the property — one near Arakawa’s body and another outside.

There were no signs of forced entry at the home, and nothing appeared to have been taken, deputies wrote in the affidavit. The maintenance workers told



Gene Hackman and wife Betsy Arakawa in June 1993.

the deputies they had last had contact with Hackman and Arakawa about two weeks earlier.

Hackman and Arakawa, a classical pianist, had been married for more than three decades and lived in Santa Fe for much of that

time. On Friday, Santa Fe film commissioner Jennifer LaBar-Tapia told reporters that the couple was “deeply woven into the fabric of Santa Fe.”

Vivian Ho and Tobi Raji contributed to this report.

SNL cold open parodies Trump-Zelensky meeting

BY LEO SANDS

As the geopolitical impact of the contentious meeting between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky continues to reverberate, “Saturday Night Live” offered its parody version of Friday’s scene in the Oval Office, throwing in an appearance by Mike Myers as Trump adviser Elon Musk for good measure.

“I’d like to welcome President Zelensky here to this incredible trap,” said James Austin Johnson, playing Trump, as he kicked off the episode’s cold open. Cue a seven-minute sketch that poked fun at everything from the length of Trump’s ties to Musk’s manner of speech, drawing parallels between the Oval Office meeting and the scripted fights usually seen on reality television.

Mike Day, as Zelensky, scarcely got a word in before he was loudly interrupted and be-

rated as an ingrate.

“What happened to ‘thank you,’ okay? Remember ‘thank you?’ You haven’t said ‘thank you’ to us once the past 15 seconds I’ve been yelling at you,” shouted Bowen Yang, playing Vice President JD Vance.

During Friday’s heated meeting, Vance badgered Zelensky to show gratitude to Trump. “Have you said thank you once in this entire meeting?” the vice president asked Zelensky — to which the Ukrainian leader responded that he had often thanked the American people.

As the barbed SNL exchange unfolded, Marcello Hernández’s Secretary of State Marco Rubio stared into space, appearing to try to take up as little room on the Oval Office couch as possible.

“He looks like Homer Simpson disappearing into that hedge,” Johnson’s Trump joked (in reference to the popular meme.)

The show also highlighted one of the more bizarre moments of Friday’s exchange, an extended dispute over the suitability of a card-game metaphor to characterize Zelensky’s diplomatic strategy.

On Friday, Zelensky bristled at Trump’s suggestion that without U.S. support, he didn’t “have the cards” to end the war with Russia, which is now dragging into its fourth year: “I’m not playing cards. I’m very serious, Mr. President,” Ukraine’s leader said.

“You say you want to end this war, but frankly, you don’t have the cards,” Johnson’s Trump said in the sketch. “I have ‘Skip,’ I have ‘Draw Four,’ I have ‘Reverse,’ I have ‘Get out of jail free,’ the Supreme Court gave me that one” — a nod to last year’s ruling that presidents are immune from prosecution for official acts taken while in office.

Johnson’s Trump also made digs at Zelensky’s outfit, com-

paring it to that of a Star Trek character. On Friday, Trump joked that Zelensky was “all dressed up,” as he arrived at the White House in a black sweatshirt with the Ukrainian trident over the chest — his trademark military style.

Johnson’s Trump jibed: “You’re not even wearing a suit. It’s disrespectful. Who shows up to the White House in a T-shirt and jeans like a garbage person?”

Enter stage right: Elon Musk, played by returning SNL legend Mike Myers, who carried a chainsaw and channeled elements of his Dr. Evil supervillain character from “Austin Powers.” Like Musk during Trump’s first Cabinet meeting last week, Myers was not wearing a suit, but a T-shirt and overcoat.

“Donald, what are you doing in my office?” Myers’s Musk asked. “I’m kidding, I’m kidding. ... Maybe not.”

Uniting his fingertips with a



SNL legend Mike Myers, second from left, appeared as Elon Musk, crashing the contentious White House meeting in the sketch.

malevolent twinkle in his eye, Myers sent up the billionaire’s complaints about “censorship” of comedy and his U.S. DOGE Service’s efforts to slash government spending.

“They’re saying I’m firing people with no cause. But I do have cause. It’s cause I feel like it.”

Johnson’s Trump wrapped up the sketch with another deep-pan knock at the president’s treatment of Zelensky: “I think that concludes a pretty much perfect press conference. We humiliated this guy. And JD finally got to audition for ‘Real Housewives of Potomac.’”

	TELEVISION									
3/3/25	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	
4.1 WRC (NBC)	• NBCNe...	• News4...	• The Voice				• The Hunting Party	• News		
4.2 WRC (IND)	Frasier	Frasier	King	King	King	King	Roseanne	Roseanne		
5.1 WTTG (Fox)	• Fox 5	• TMZ	• Extracted		• Rescue: HI-Surf		• Fox 5 at 10	• News		
7.1 WJLA (ABC)	• Wheel	• Jeopardy!	• The Bachelor				• Mormon Wives	• News		
9.1 WUSA (CBS)	• InsideEd...	• ET	• Neighbor	• Poppa's	• NCIS		• NCIS: Origins	• 9 News		
14.1 WFDC (UNI)	• Rosa		• conveniencia		• de la señora García		• C.D.I. Código de	• Noticias		
20.1 WDCA (MNTV)	• FamFeud	• FamFeud	• Fox 5 News		• TrueCri...	• Crime	• FamFeud	• FamFeud	• Law-SVU	
22.1 WMPT (PBS)	• Connec...	• Collect	• Ken Burns: The Civil War				• Kristofferson: Life			
26.1 WETA (PBS)	• PBS News Hour		• Cherry Blossoms	• LivedHe...	• WETAAr...		• 60s and 70s Soul			
32.1 WHUT (PBS)	• White	• Chavis	• The Legacy Series	• Neigh Fav	• Army		• Afropop: Cultural	• BBCNe...		
50.1 WDCW (CW)	• BobHeart	• BobHeart	• All American	• Sullivan's Crossing			• DC News Now	• Neighbor		
66.1 WPXW (ION)	• FBI		• FBI	• FBI	• FBI		• FBI	• FBI		
A&E	Live PD	Live PD	Live PD	Live PD	Live PD	Live PD	Live PD	LivePD		
AMC	Movie: The Green Mile ★★★ (1999)									
Animal Planet	Homestead Rescue		Homestead Rescue		Homestead Rescue		Homestead Rescue	Homeste...		
BET	(6:00) Movie: Vampire		in Brooklyn ★★ (1995)		Celeb True Crime		Celeb True Crime	Family		
Bravo	Below Deck Down		Under		Watch What	Below Deck Down		Summer House		
Cartoon Network	Burgers	Burgers	Burgers	American	American	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	
CNN	• E. B. OutFront (Live)		• Cooper 360 (Live)		• The Source (Live)		• CNN (Live)		• Laura	
Comedy Central	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	Office	Office	Office	DailyShow	
Discovery	Contraband: Seized		Contraband: Seized		Contraband: Seized		Contraband: Seized	Contraba...		
Disney	(2:30) Bluey		Primos	Primos	Place	Place	Jessie	Jessie	Kiff	
E!	(5:30) Movie: Fantastic Beasts: Cri...		Movie: 300	★★★ (2006)					E! News	
ESPN	College Basketball	Wake Forest at Duke (Live)			College Basketball	Kansas at Houston (Live)			SportsC. (Live)	
ESPN2	TGL Golf	New York Golf Club vs. Boston Common Golf (Live)			College Basketball	Wichita State at North Texas (Live)			Basketball	
Food Network	BeatBobby	BeatBobby	Kids Baking Championship				Chopped		Chopped	
Fox News	Ingraham (Live)		Jesse Watters (Live)		Hannity (Live)		Gutfeld!		Fox News	
Freeform	(5:40) Movie: The Incredibles (2004)		(:20) Movie: Incredibles 2 ★★★ (2018)		Elastigirl battles a mad cybercriminal called Screenslaver.				The 700 Club	
FX	(5:30) Movie: Uncharted ★★ (2022)		Movie: Transformers: The Last Knight ★★ (2017)		The war between Transformers and humans threatens Earth.					
Hallmark	(6:00) Movie: Taking the Reins (2021)		Movie: Betty's Bad Luck in Love (2024)			Golden Girls	Golden Girls	Golden Girls		
Hallmark M&M	(6:00) Emma Fielding Mysteries		Emma Fielding Mysteries			Murder, She Wrote		Murder ...		
HBO	(6:00) Movie: Green Lantern ★★ (2011)		(:55) The White Lotus		Celtics Chapter I: Founding Fathers (P)	The White Lotus		(:05) Celtics		
HGTV	Married-Estate		Celebrity IOU		Celebrity IOU	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters		
History	(6:00) Mysteries		History's-Mysteries		History's-Mysteries	(:05) History's Mo.		Mysteries		
Lifetime	Castle		Castle		Castle	(:05) Castle		Castle		
MASN	MLB Baseball	Boston Red Sox at Baltimore Orioles			Sports	InsideECU	Carolina			
Monumental	(6:30) NHL Hockey		Caps (Live)			NHL Hockey				
MSNBC	MSNBC Prime (Live)		With Jen Psaki (Live)		R. Maddow (Live)		Last Word (Live)		11th Hour	
MTV	Movie: The Hangover Part II ★★ (2011)				Movie: The Hangover Part III ★★ (2013)					
Nat'l Geographic	Catch a Smuggler		Catch a Smuggler		Catch a Smuggler		Catch a Smuggler	Airport		
Nickelodeon	SpongeB... Thunder.		Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends		
News	Vargas Report (Live)		Cuomo (Live)		On Balance (Live)		Brannfield (Live)	Cuomo		
Paramount	Two and a Half Men		Movie: Jack Reacher ★★ (2012)		An investigator probes a random sniper attack.					
Paramount+Sho	(5:45) Movie: B... leading feminist activist. (P)		Movie: The Glorias (2020)		Gloria Steinem becomes a	Yellowjackets		School Spirits		
Syfy	Movie: Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides ★★ (2011)		Capt. Jack Sparrow searches for the Fountain of Youth.			Movie: Journey 2: The Mysterious Island ★★ (2012)				
TBS	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	American	American	American	
TCM	(5:30) Movie: 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)		Movie: The Pride of the Yankees ★★★★★ (1942)			(:15) Movie: Norma Rae ★★ (1979)				
TLC	Last Resort		Last Resort		(:05) Baylen Out Loud		(:05) Last Resort	Baldwins		
TNT	Unrivaled (Live)		Unrivaled Basketball	(:45)	Unrivaled Basketball					
Travel	(6:00) Mysteries- Unk...		Mysteries of the Unknown			Mysteries of the Unknown				
truTV	Unrivaled		Unrivaled Basketball	(:45)	Unrivaled Basketball		Unrivaled	Movie: Bull Durham (...)		
TV Land	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	King			
TV One	Cosby/Sh...		Cosby/Sh...		Fatal Attraction	Fatal Attraction	Fatal Attraction	Homicide		
USA Network	Chicago Fire		Chicago Fire		Chicago Fire		Chi. Fire			
VH1	(5:30) Movie: Purple R...		Hip Hop		Hip Hop		Movie: The Color Purple (1985)			
WNC8	Best Mattress Topper		7News at...		New Shark	SportsTalk	WorldNe...	WJLANe...	Paid Prog.	National
	LEGEND: ★ indicates new or live programs ♦ High Definition									
	Movie Ratings (from TMS) ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Fair ★ Poor No stars: not rated									

BIRTHDAY | MARCH 3: Beneath your no-nonsense confidence is a sensitive soul. You are compassionate and tenacious. This is a year of service to others, probably to family. Therefore, take care of yourself, because you are a valuable resource. Could this be the year for a makeover? Do something to personalize your home.

Moon Alert: After 5:45 a.m. today there are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions. The Moon is in Taurus.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19). Today Mercury enters your sign giving you a strong desire to talk to others. Meanwhile, the Moon is in your Money House, which will tempt you to make emotional decisions about financial transactions. "I want that. I want that right now."

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20). Today the Moon is in your sign, which gives you a slight advantage over the other signs. Although you might feel more emotional, your good fortune will be improved. Why not test this out? Ask the universe for a small favor.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20). You're energetic, enthusiastic and eager to schmooze with younger people and artistic types. However, even though you make a fabulous impression on everyone, today you want to catch your breath and pull in your reins a bit and be low-key.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22). A conversation with a female colleague or friend might be significant today.

In fact, you might want to share your hopes and dreams for the future with someone to get their feedback. This is also a good day to talk to bosses, parents, teachers and people in power. Make your pitch.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22). For different reasons, according to the details of your world, you are high-viz today, which means people seem to know personal details about your private life. Be aware of this in case you have to do some damage control. Meanwhile, look for opportunities to travel for pleasure; this will please you.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22). Today you want to do something different. You're hungry for adventure! You want to travel and see new places and meet new faces. (Hey, if you can't travel, you can still see new places and meet new faces in your own city.) Do something different today.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22). Your ambition is aroused, and you want to be productive. Fortunately, relations with others are excellent. Today, you're concerned with banking details and anything to do with shared property, inheritances and the wealth and assets of someone else. Cross your t's and dot your i's.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21). This is a playful time for you, so seek out opportunities for pleasure and fun. Sports events, fun activities with kids, happy hour with friends and sharing time with others will appeal to you. However, today it's in your best interest to go more than halfway when dealing with others. (Remember this.)

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21). You're keen to work and get a lot done today, because you want results. However, you will be inclined to put your personal considerations second to those of others. This doesn't mean you're toiling in the salt mines all day. Au contraire! Both Mercury and Venus urge you to take time off for good behavior.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19). As this week begins, you feel playful. You also feel the need to be yourself. However, you'll also feel protective and nurturing to others, especially children. Home repairs and old decorating projects might be on the menu.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18). Today is a mixed bag. In one way, you're eager to talk to others and express your opinions and views. But in another way, you want to relax at home and take it easy. (You're also keen to work and get things done.) Busy you!

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20). In discussions with others today, you have a strong need to air your opinions and share your ideas, which is why you need to find someone who will really listen to you. You don't want to spend time chatting about something meaningless.

— Georgia Nicks
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BRIDGE

Unlucky Louie says that when his wife sends him to the grocery, he requires detailed written instructions.

"She says she needs onions," Louie told me. "I don't know if it's garden-fresh onions, frozen chopped onions or canned onions to go on a green-bean casserole. Plus, I can never find anything in the store even when I know what I'm looking for."

Louie also has trouble locating queens. At today's slam, he took the ace of clubs and lost a trump finesse. Louie ruffed the club return, drew trumps and went looking for the queen of diamonds. He mis-guessed, playing East for the queen, and probably wouldn't have found the queen in the produce section either. Down one.

After Louie draws trumps, he can delay: He takes the A-K of spades and ruffs dummy's jack.

When West discards, Louie has a count. East had six spades, two

trumps and (from West's fourth-highest lead of the three) four clubs, so one diamond at most. So Louie cashes the king and lets the jack ride.

DAILY QUESTION
You hold:
♠ K J 4 ♥ J 9 8 4
♦ A 9 3 ♣ A J 9
Your partner opens one heart, and you bid 2NT, a conventional forcing raise. He next bids three diamonds. What do you say?
ANSWER: After your 2NT, partner's minimum bid of a new suit shows a singleton there and lets you see if you have useful cards. If your diamonds were K-Q-3, you would have "wasted" honors opposite his singleton, but your ace is ideal. Cue-bid four clubs to encourage slam.

— Frank Stewart
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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

			9	2	3	1	8	6
			7		6			5
6		9					7	2
7	6		4		8			
	2		6			1		
		4	3			6	7	
8	4			5		7		1
5			8		1			
9	1	3	6	7	4			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

3/3
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PREVIOUS SUDOKU SOLUTION

2	3	6	7	9	4	8	5	1
1	7	4	2	5	8	9	3	6
8	5	9	3	6	1	7	2	4
6	1	8	4	7	3	2	9	5
4	2	3	5	8	9	6	1	7
5	9	7	6	1	2	4	8	3
7	8	1	9	4	5	3	6	2
3	6	5	8	2	7	1	4	9
9	4	2	1	3	6	5	7	8

SCRABBLEGRAMS

PAR SCORE 145-155
BEST SCORE 223

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 scragrams@gmail.com

03-03

PREVIOUS SCRABBLEGRAMS SOLUTION

B	E	I	N	I	G	Z	N
S	I	N	I	P	P	E	T
T	I	O	L	L	W	A	Y
S	O	U	R	I	S	H	

RACK 1 = 9

RACK 2 = 72

RACK 3 = 63

RACK 4 = 62

PAR SCORE 145-155

TOTAL 206

JUMBLECROSSWORDS

by David L. Hoyt

3-3-25

CLUE ACROSS ANSWER

1. Soak up
5. Mix together
6. Small lizard
7. Slanted typeface

CLUE DOWN ANSWER

1. City on the Hudson
2. of hand
3. Extreme
4. Courageous

CLUE: The _____ was taken on tours around the United States to promote unity after the Civil War.

BONUS

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.

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LA TIMES CROSSWORD

By Janice Luttrell & Katie Hale

ACROSS

1 "Why _ I think of that?"

6 Word after folk or fairy

10 PD alert

13 Frozen drinks with spoon-straws

14 _ boom

15 Big bucks or the Bucks, for short

16 Choose as a live-in romantic partner

18 Logger's tool

19 New Year's popper

20 Fashion designer Anna

21 Desert watering hole

23 Hosp. areas

24 Loose frocks with wide bottoms

27 Med. condition treated by Ritalin

29 Board game played on a map

30 Sleep study subject

32 Foamy lather

34 Winter flakes

38 Count in a marching command

41 Letter-shaped beam

42 Flower holder

43 Dorothy nickname

44 Share a border with

46 Taj Mahal city

47 With 59-Across, what one might say when entering the starts of 16-, 24-, and 38-Across?

52 Fall over

55 Simply must

56 Sundial numeral

57 Short skirt

58 "Kings & Queens" singer Max

59 See 47-Across

63 Replayed tennis serve

64 Great Plains Natives

65 "Zip your lip!"

DOWN

1 1970s music genre

2 Blood of the Greek gods

3 Start of a letter to the North Pole

4 Head twister

5 Scolding sound

6 "Namely ..."

7 Singer DiFranco

8 Like an amazing party, slangily

9 Canyon comebacks

10 Accumulate

11 Playful sprite

12 " _ your heart"

14 Like a spiderweb

17 Like most donated clothing

22 Requests

24 Defrost

25 Beats Electron-ics co-founder

26 Get out of bed

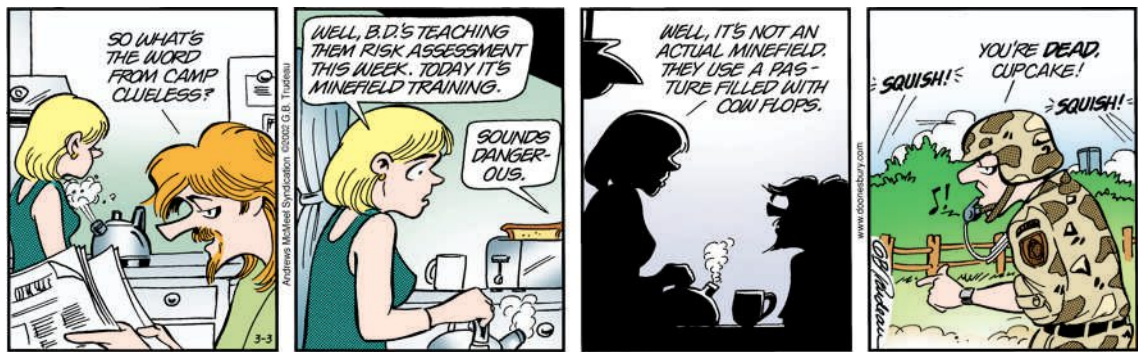
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12
13							14					15	
16						17						18	
19						20				21	22		
23					24				25	26			
				27	28				29				
30	31					32	33				34	35	36
38						39				40			
41						42				43			
					44	45			46				
47	48	49					50	51			52	53	54
55							56				57		
58					59	60	61			62			
63						64				65			
66					67					68			

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SATURDAY'S LA TIMES SOLUTION

S	E	W	E	R		A	F	B	S		A	F	A	R
E	L	O	P	E		M	O	L	E		S	O	F	A
A	C	R	E	D		E	R	I	C		T	R	I	B
M	A	K	E	S	A	N	E	N	T	R	A	N	C	E
	M	I	S	E	R		V	I	S	E		O	I	L
B	I	N	G	A	I	M	E	F		T	O	G	A	S
I	N	G	A	S	E	R	F			O	N	O		
D	O	U	B	L	E	S	C	O	O	P		C	O	N
		P	I	E		S	H	A	H		E	D	A	M
R	I	A	T	A		E	L	S	A		R	V	S	
A	H	S		S	P	A	M		A	B	B	E	Y	
P	A	W	T	E	R	N	I	T	Y	L	E	A	V	E
I	D	E	A		E	C	C	O		E	A	S	E	L
E	T	A	L		S	H	A	D		S	L	O	T	S
R	O	T	E		S	O	L	D		T	E	N	S	E

CLASSIC DOONESBURY



GARRY TRUDEAU

PICKLES



BRIAN CRANE

RED AND ROVER



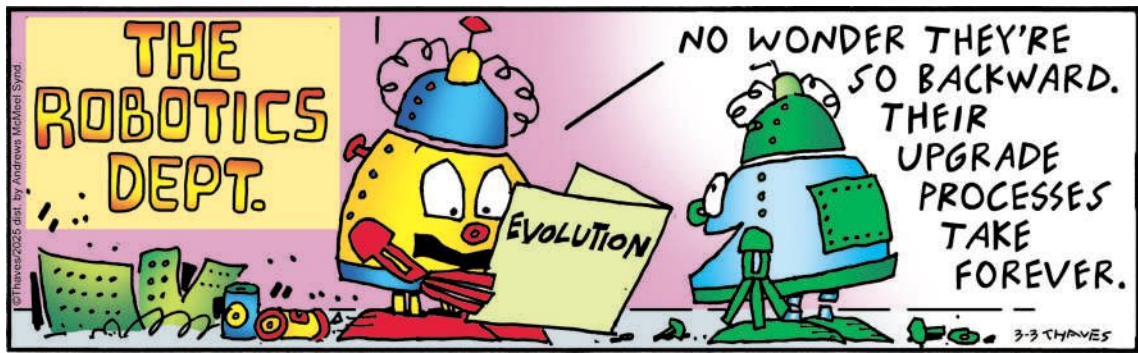
BRIAN BASSET

AGNES



TONY COCHRAN

FRANK AND ERNEST



TOM THAVES

WUMO



MIKAEL WULFF & ANDERS MORGENTHALER

CLASSIC PEANUTS



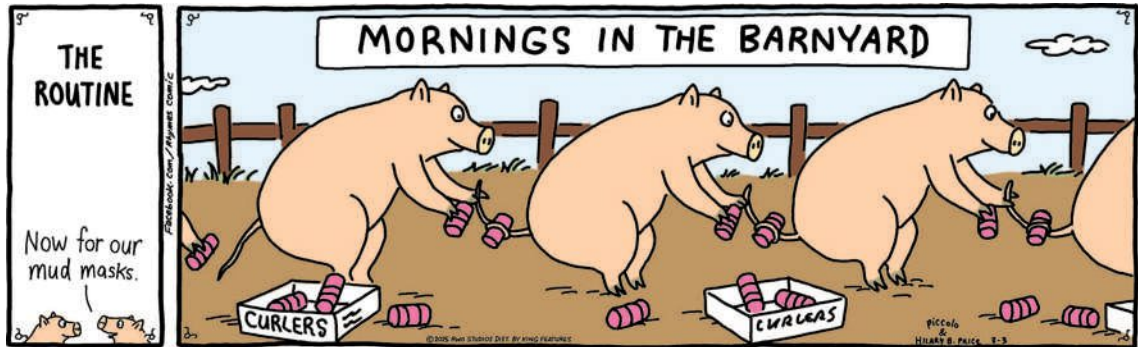
CHARLES SCHULZ

CRABGRASS



TAUHIID BONDIA

RHYMES WITH ORANGE



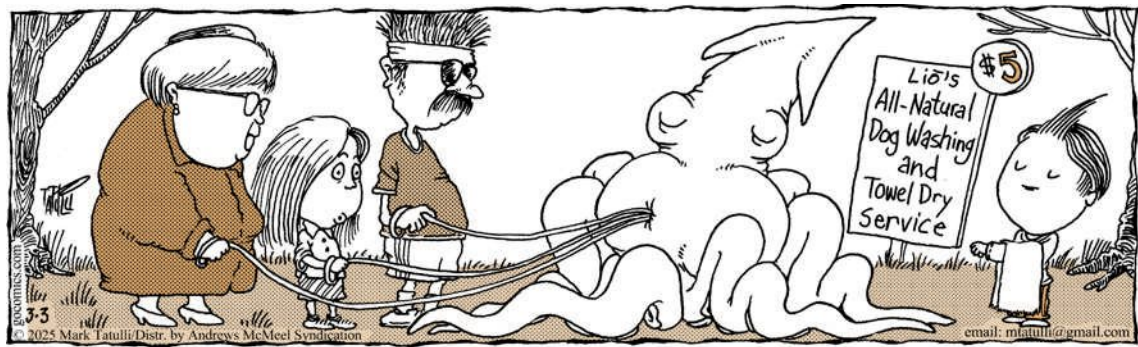
HILARY PRICE

MARK TRAIL



JULES RIVERA

LIO



MARK TATULLI

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



MIKE PETERS

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



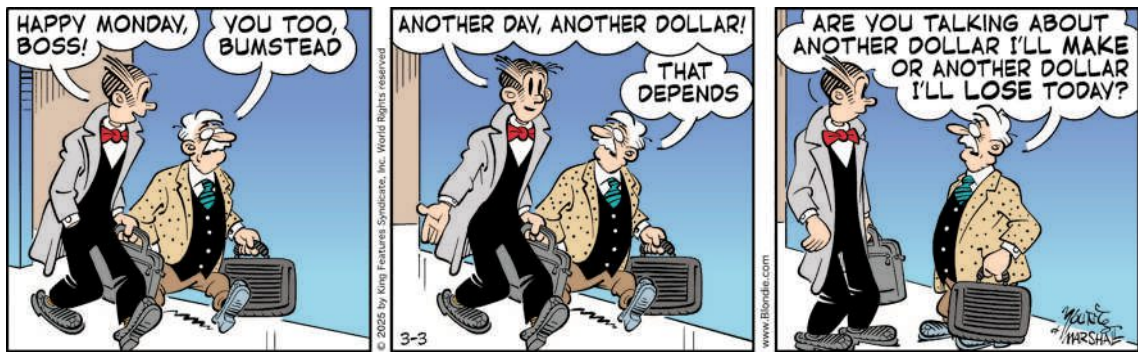
CHRIS BROWNE

BALDO



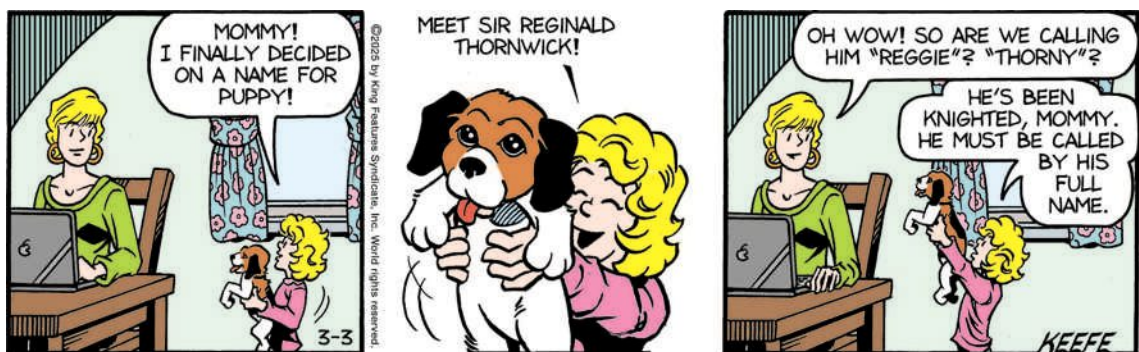
HECTOR CANTU & CARLOS CASTELLANOS

BLONDIE



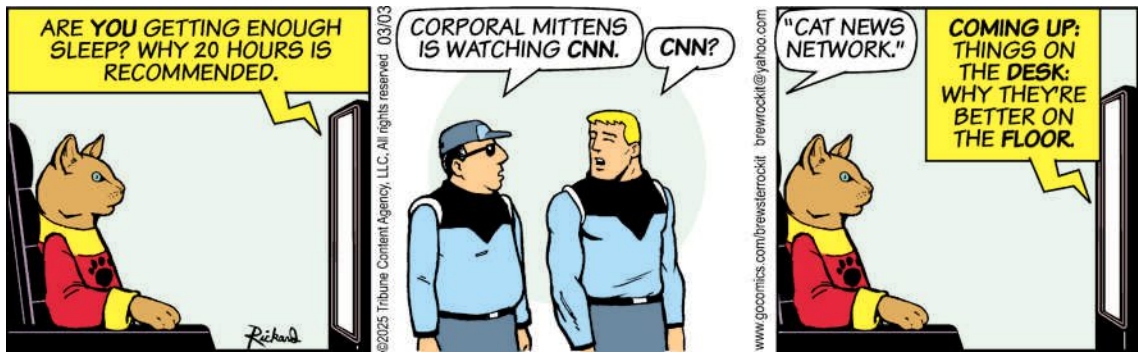
DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL

SALLY FORTH



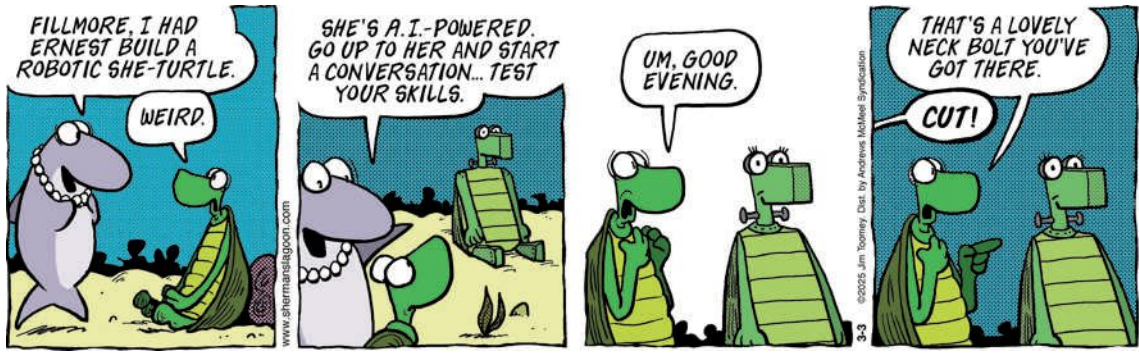
FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & JIM KEEFE

BREWSTER ROCKIT: SPACE GUY!



TIM RICKARD

SHERMAN'S LAGOON



JIM TOOMEY

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



STEPHAN PASTIS

CURTIS



RAY BILLINGSLEY

MUTTS

PATRICK McDONNELL

ZITS

JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN

HEART OF THE CITY

STEENZ

JUDGE PARKER

FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO & MIKE MANLEY

FRAZZ

JEFF MALLETT

SIX CHIX

BANNERMAN, XUNISE, KONAR, LAWTON, PATRINOS & PIRO

GARFIELD

JIM DAVIS

BARNEY AND CLYDE

WEINGARTENS & CLARK

DUSTIN

STEVE KELLEY & JEFF PARKER

FLASH GORDON

DAN SCHKADE

PRICKLY CITY

SCOTT STANTIS

LOOSE PARTS

DAVE BLAZEK

NON SEQUITUR

WILEY

BABY BLUES

RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT

BIG NATE

LINCOLN PEIRCE

SPEED BUMP

DAVE COVERLY

DENNIS THE MENACE

H. KETCHAM

ON THE FASTRACK

BILL HOLBROOK

FAMILY CIRCUS

BIL KEANE

REPLY ALL LITE

DONNA A. LEWIS

BEEBLE BAILEY

GREG, BRIAN & NEAL WALKER

Commanders pay small price for Samuel's big upside



Jerry Brewer

There is no current football player more aptly named than Deebo Samuel. In a sport that introduced us to Mean Joe Greene, Night Train Lane and the Refrigerator, Samuel is the modern version of a character come to life. His father, Galen, knew it early. As a toddler, Tyshun Raequan Samuel would take things without asking for permission or being gentle. So dad nicknamed the rambunctious boy "Deebo" after the bully in the movie "Friday,"

which came out in 1995, the year before his son was born. What a clairvoyant jokester. Samuel, now 29 and the newest member of the Washington Commanders, is the NFL's premier snatch-yo-chain wide receiver. In the right situation, his impact can surpass his production, which has decreased in recent years and prompted the San Francisco 49ers to honor his trade request. There are players who put up fancy statistics, and there are players who clobber the competition for every yard available to them. The Commanders should get used to using his nickname as a verb. When he's on the field,

opponents can get Deebo'd on any play. He approaches the wide receiver position with a running back's force. Even as his numbers shrink, his ability to manufacture yards after the catch — YAC, as it's called — remains elite. Offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury created a top-10 offense despite a YAC deficiency last season. Samuel won't be tackled easily. Kingsbury can line up Samuel anywhere he wishes, which includes putting him in the backfield because, at 6 feet and 215 pounds, he can take the occasional handoff or run a creative route from the tailback's

normal spot. Not long ago, it would have been reckless for a rising team — one still in the early stages of development despite a 12-5 record and an NFC championship game appearance this past season — to make an aggressive move for an aging wide receiver this soon. But that team-building bible now has a cracked spine and yellow pages. The Commanders merely took a mild risk Saturday when they traded a fifth-round draft pick to San Francisco to acquire Samuel and add his \$17.55 million salary cap charge to their 2025 payroll. By definition, Samuel is a

SEE BREWER ON D5



GODOFREDO A. VÁSQUEZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wide receiver Deebo Samuel, acquired for a fifth-round draft pick, is a tenacious veteran who fits Washington's budding culture.



SAUL MARTINEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Like all players, Dylan Crews has access to video during games for studying his at-bats. But he finds watching live action from the dugout to be just as valuable.

Seeing and believing

The Nats don't spend big, but they are rich enough in talent to surprise us



Thomas Boswell

When I asked Siri to name the greatest underdog general manager in history who won despite almost no resources, I was not expecting my iPhone to answer, "Vo Nguyen Giap, who defeated both the French and American forces in Vietnam."

No, Siri: *general manager*, not general. I was leaning toward Mike Rizzo, the GM assigned to turn the 71-91 Washington

Nationals into a .500 team with masking tape, spit and mystic incantations — but no money. Last week, the Nats brought back Kyle Finnegan, who had 38 saves last season, for \$6 million. The right-hander may be the last modest piece of a humble puzzle that gives the Nats a sane chance to reach .500 this season with an entertaining, prospect-laden team.

As someone in need of distraction from a world that's going to hell several times faster

SEE BOSWELL ON D3

In an era of analytics and iPads, Crews trusts his eyes for information

BY SPENCER NUSBAUM

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA. — Theoretically, Dylan Crews could see things the way most baseball players do. Theoretically, he could walk to the back wall of the Washington Nationals' spring training dugout, grab the MLB-issued iPad and have access to more information than the fans in attendance. He's 23 years old. He knows how to use a tablet. But he doesn't rely on that. Not often, anyway.

Why? "I feel like the recipe to every-

thing is right out there in front of you watching the game," Crews said.

"He's the one kid that we have that really pays attention to detail," Manager Dave Martinez said. "I mean, day in, day out. He doesn't come in after and run to the iPad. He comes in and watches the game."

Since tablets returned to dugouts in 2021, players have used them as a tool to review their at-bats. Video is uploaded to the tablet after each half-inning. But

SEE NATIONALS ON D3

Wizards' George keeps bringing 'that fire' on defense as a rookie

BY VARUN SHANKAR

The whistle sounded, indicating Kyshawn George had been assessed a shooting foul. The Washington Wizards' wing looked to his team's bench and threw his palms up in apparent exasperation before letting his arms drop to his sides.

Moments of frustration, as seen in that February matchup with the Indiana Pacers, have been common for George, a 21-year-old rookie still striving to earn the benefit of the doubt from NBA referees. George is in

the 12th percentile among wings in foul rate, per analytics site Cleaning the Glass. He has committed three or more fouls in more than 60 percent of his games.

But his foul problems are on a rapidly shrinking list of defensive flaws. George has quickly realized the defensive potential that coaxed Washington into trading up and selecting him with the No. 24 pick in last year's draft. He has paired his physical gifts — at the NBA combine, George was measured at 6-foot-7 with a 6-10¼ wingspan — with a

physicality and savvy that let him guard multiple positions at a high level.

"You see that fire. He's talking crap back to guys. He's holding his own," said Marcus Smart, among George's newest teammates and the 2021-22 defensive player of the year. "... He's taking contact, and he's dishing out contact. And that's what you got to have on a young team. ... Especially the way the record looks for us, guys are going to come in and think it's going to be easy. And he showed that it's not."

Even George's fouls could have

positive effects down the line.

Teammate Jordan Poole sensed George's discontent with the whistles before the all-star break and pulled him aside. Poole explained to George that his play this season was establishing the defensive reputation he would carry through the next chunk of his career: lengthy, active, aggressive.

As that reputation calcifies, George's fouls will drop, Poole explained, pointing to Golden State Warriors guard Gary Payton II, Miami Heat guard Davion Mitchell and Sacramento Kings

forward Keegan Murray as examples of long, athletic defenders who are "able to get away with a lot of fouls because that's their style of defense."

Asked about his frustration level with the officiating before a game late last month, George focused on his own play.

"I can't expect [to get] the same type of calls as a vet," he said. "... I need to understand that and just be more disciplined."

SEE WIZARDS ON D5

Wizards at Heat
7:30 p.m., Monumental 2

Te-Biasu's stunning three beats Buckeyes

MARYLAND 93, OHIO STATE 90 (OT)

Terps are the No. 4 seed in Big Ten tournament

BY KAREEM COPELAND

Time seemed to slow after the ball left Sarah Te-Biasu's hands. Heads turned as the arc of the ball peaked near the top of the backboard before it fell softly through the net, not even grazing the rim.

What came next was bedlam. The VCU transfer let out a shriek, fists balled, as Maryland teammate Kaylene Smikle sprinted over for a chest bump. Christina Dalce, who had fouled out, ran off the bench and all the way across the court to celebrate — even though there was still a second left on the game clock. (The coaches had to corral her before the officials noticed.) Ohio State couldn't manage a final heave before the buzzer, and the noise pouring out of the stands at Xfinity Center seemed to make the seats shake.

Thanks to Te-Biasu's three-pointer Sunday night, the No. 19 Terrapins had prevailed, 93-90 in overtime, against No. 12 Ohio State in the regular season finale. Shyanne Sellers (21 points, eight assists), who may have played her last game in College Park, held both hands on her head, jaw dropped in awe. Dalce (eight points, 11 rebounds) was in the stands, celebrating with students. Te-Biasu (15 points) was lifted onto the shoulders of her teammates.

On the other side, Fox Sports 1 cameras caught Ohio State star Cotie McMahon (18 points) flashing a pair of middle fingers after she fouled out in overtime.

At shootaround earlier in the day, Te-Biasu won the half-court shooting contest among her teammates. Her winner against the Buckeyes was closer to the three-point arc but came on the run.

"It's crazy because ... I just made that shot," Te-Biasu said through a grin. "I was really happy. It felt good, yeah."

The victory put Maryland (23-6, 13-5 Big Ten) back in the conversation to host during the opening weekend of the NCAA

SEE MARYLAND ON D5

Big Ten quarterfinal:

Maryland vs. TBD

Friday, approx. 2:30 p.m., BTN

FIGURE SKATING

"Legacy on Ice" memorial honors members of the skating community lost in January's plane crash. **B1**

BASEBALL

The World Series-winning Astros are all but gone. How their new group fares is still anyone's guess. **D3**

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Sidwell Friends and Gonzaga tower over the competition in the DCSAA Class AA title games. **D4**

THE DAY IN SPORTS

COLLEGE BASKETBALL Self addresses racism, threats targeting Mayo

Kansas men's coach **Bill Self** spoke out Saturday night, imploring fans who had peppered Jayhawks guard **Zeke Mayo** with racist, threatening social media posts after a loss to No. 10 Texas Tech to blame him, not his players.

"We competed. We tried. We came up short and I'm proud of their efforts and I'm also proud of their preparation to be ready for the game," Self said in a statement released on social media. "We haven't had the overall year that we had hoped for ourselves, nor the year that many other people have expected, but it hasn't been from a lack of caring. I can do a lot of things better. We all could do a lot of things better. But I'll roll with these guys every day and be proud of it. Any criticism about the team should be directed at me. I'm the head coach."

A Kansas athletic department official told The Washington Post on Sunday that the school would have no additional comment.

The vitriol toward Mayo came after the Jayhawks fell to 19-10 overall and 10-8 in the Big 12 with the 78-73 home loss to the Red Raiders. The loss was the third at home this season for Kansas, its most since 2017, and marked the second straight season in which it has lost at least eight conference games.

Mayo, Kansas's second-leading scorer, had only five points in the loss and apologized on social media, sharing screenshots of what appeared to be direct Instagram messages containing racist comments and threats of violence.

"I 100% deserve all the criticism in the world. My performance was beyond pitiful today, and has been for a while now," he wrote on his social media accounts (via ESPN), which later appeared to have been deleted. "I work my ass off everyday to be great, but I can't be perfect all the time. I'm sorry to our fans and my teammates, I will continue to get better."

— *Cindy Boren*

Jaden Akins scored 19 points and **Jaxon Kohler** had 10 points and a career-high 16 rebounds to power No. 8 Michigan State to a 71-62 win over No. 11 Wisconsin at home in East Lansing.

The Spartans (24-5, 15-3 Big Ten) have won five straight, putting them in position to contend for the conference championship with a week left in the regular season.

The Badgers (22-7, 12-6) had won six of seven. ...

No. 6 South Carolina will be the No. 1 seed in the SEC women's tournament after winning a coin flip.

The Gamecocks and No. 1 Texas both finished 15-1 in conference play. They split their season series, leading to a coin flip to determine the top seed for the tournament, which begins Wednesday in Greenville, S.C.

Tessa Johnson scored 16 points as South Carolina earned a 78-66 win over No. 15 Kentucky at home in Columbia. Texas beat Florida, 72-46, at home in Austin. ...

Hannah Hidalgo scored 20 points as No. 3 Notre Dame bounced back from consecutive losses to clinch a share of the ACC regular season title with a 72-59 victory against No. 25 Louisville in South Bend, Ind.

The Fighting Irish (25-4, 16-2) share the title with North Carolina State, a 69-45 winner over SMU in Dallas. ...

Paige Bueckers had 19 points, seven assists and three steals in her final regular season game to lift No. 5 Connecticut (28-3, 18-0 Big East) to a 92-57 win over visiting Marquette in Storrs. ...

Paris Clark and **Kymora Johnson** each hit two late foul shots to help visiting Virginia knock off No. 8 North Carolina, 78-75, in Chapel Hill.

Latasha Lattimore had 23 points for Virginia (16-14, 8-10 ACC) in its third consecutive win. **Maria Gakdeng** led the Tar Heels (25-6, 13-5) with a career-high 25 points. ...

Carys Baker and **Rose Micheaux** each scored 17 points as visiting Virginia Tech (18-11, 9-9 ACC) edged Clemson, 78-76, in South Carolina.

PRO BASKETBALL Brown helps Celtics hold off the Nuggets

Jaylen Brown scored 22 points and **Derek White** hit a floater from the foul line with less than a minute remaining to help the Boston Celtics recover after blowing most of a 20-point first-half lead and defeat the visiting Denver Nuggets, 110-103.



JESSICA HILL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

U-Conn. icon

Paige Bueckers, center, has her number revealed Sunday afternoon on the Huskies of Honor wall on senior day in Storrs, Conn.

SPOTLIGHT: NASCAR

Bell makes it two in a row with Austin victory

BY JIM VERTUNO

AUSTIN — Christopher Bell is making the most of his late-race chances to seize victories.

Bell passed Kyle Busch with five laps to go, then held off Daytona 500 winner William Byron to win the first road course race of the NASCAR Cup Series season Sunday at Circuit of the Americas.

The late drama produced his second consecutive victory after his overtime win at Atlanta Motor Speedway a week earlier.

Once Bell cleared Busch, the Oklahoma driver had to make a desperate bid in his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota to stay in front of Byron in his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet and Tyler Reddick, the 2023 race winner, in his 23XI Racing Toyota.

Bell earned his 11th career victory and has won multiple races for four consecutive seasons. Busch, who led 43 of 95 laps in his Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet, faded to fifth as his winless streak stretched to 60 races dating from 2023.

"These road course races are just so much fun," Bell said. "[Busch] was doing such a good job running his race. He bobbled and allowed me to get out front. When he did, I just said, 'Don't beat yourself.'"

The furious nip-and-tuck finish could have ended in a crash that ruined someone's race and jumbled the field with a late caution flag. Busch and Bell have a heated history of collisions in Austin, notably last year when Busch confronted the younger driver over contact in a race in which Bell finished second.

This time, everyone kept it clean all the way to the end.

"Amazing to have such respectful, clean hard racing. It was a beautiful way to end a race," Bell said.

That didn't mean Byron wasn't pushing him hard. And Byron had his own battle with Reddick, who was looking for an opening to attack the front.

"I couldn't never get beside [Bell]. We've always raced well together; I didn't want to move him blatantly," Byron said.

Even Busch complimented Bell's driving. "I'll give Christopher credit," Busch said. "He ran me really hard."

Bell's crew chief, Adam Stevens, said the consecutive wins on a superspeedway oval and a road course show the team can fight for wins every week, starting with the next two races at Phoenix Raceway and Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

"We don't think there's a track that we go to that we don't have a chance to win,"

Stevens said. "We have everything we need to win every single weekend."

Hendrick Motorsports' Chase Elliott started third and quickly dropped to the back when he was spun in the first turn, but he fought his way back through the field to fourth.

Connor Zilisch had a wild day in his Cup Series debut for Trackhouse. The 18-year-old started 14th and dropped back with contact in the first lap. He recovered to get back within in the top 15 by the start of the third stage.

That's when his day ended. Zilisch couldn't avoid a spin by teammate Daniel Suarez in lap 50, smashed into the wall and had to scramble out of his car when it caught fire.

NASCAR has to decide whether it will return to Austin in 2026. The track has proved popular with drivers and has hosted Formula One since 2012 and MotoGP since 2013. Speedway Motorsports rents the facility for race week.

"We'll take a look at ticket renewals, feedback from the fans who attended the race and the overall results before we talk with NASCAR about next year's schedule," said Mike Burch, chief operating officer for Speedway Motorsports.

— *Associated Press*

TELEVISION AND RADIO

NHL	
6:30 p.m.	Ottawa at Washington » Monumental Sports Network, WJFK (106.7 FM)
7 p.m.	New York Islanders at New York Rangers » NHL Network
NBA	
7:30 p.m.	Washington at Miami » Monumental Sports Network 2, WTEM (980 AM)
8 p.m.	Houston at Oklahoma City » NBA TV
MLB SPRING TRAINING	
1 p.m.	Boston vs. Baltimore » MASN, ESPN
8 p.m.	Milwaukee vs. Cincinnati » MLB Network
MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL	
7 p.m.	Wake Forest at Duke » ESPN
7 p.m.	McNeese State at Stephen F. Austin » ESPNU
9 p.m.	Kansas at Houston » ESPN
9 p.m.	Prairie View A&M at Jackson State » ESPNU
9 p.m.	Wichita State at North Texas » ESPN2

9 p.m.	UCLA at Northwestern » Fox Sports 1
11 p.m.	Eastern Washington at Montana » ESPN2

WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL — UNRIVALED	
7:30 p.m.	Rose vs. Laces » TNT
8:45 p.m.	Phantom vs. Lunar Owls » TNT

GOLF	
3 p.m.	TGL: Los Angeles vs. the Bay » ESPN2
7 p.m.	TGL: Boston Common vs. New York » ESPN2

TENNIS	
10 p.m.	WTA: BNP Paribas Open, qualifying » Tennis Channel

BASEBALL	
1 p.m.	World Baseball Classic qualifier: Brazil vs. Germany » Fox Sports 2, MLB Network
8 p.m.	World Baseball Classic qualifier: Colombia vs. China » Fox Sports 2

WOMEN'S COLLEGE GOLF	
2:30 p.m.	Darius Rucker Intercollegiate, first round » Golf Channel

The world No. 3 closed with a solid 69, sealing a 13-under 275 total at Sentosa Golf Club. ...

Dylan Naidoo held his nerve on the first playoff hole against **Laurie Canter** with a birdie putt to win the rain-marred South African Open in Durban for his first DP World Tour victory and a spot in the British Open.

The fourth round was first suspended and then canceled because of a flooded course at the Durban Country Club. ...

Ryan Peake, an Australian former motorcycle gang member who turned his life around through golf, earned a place at the British Open when he won the 104th New Zealand Open by one stroke in Queenstown.

SOCCER

Manchester United booted from FA Cup

Manchester United crashed out of the FA Cup after a penalty shootout defeat to Fulham at home at Old Trafford.

Victor Lindelof and **Joshua Zirkzee** had spot kicks saved after the fifth-round game ended 1-1 after extra time. Goalkeeper **Bernd Leno** was the hero as Fulham won 4-3 in the shootout and advanced to the quarterfinals. ...

AC Milan fell further into crisis as a stoppage-time penalty condemned it to a 2-1 defeat at home to Lazio in the Italian league.

Despite being reduced to 10 men, Milan managed to level in the 84th minute, but **Pedro** converted a penalty in the eighth minute of stoppage time.

Milan dropped to ninth in the standings and was leapfrogged by Roma after **Claudio Ranieri's** team fought back to beat 10-man Como, 2-1. ...

Naomi Girma, women's soccer's first million-dollar player, was injured in her Chelsea debut.

The U.S. defender was taken off after 59 minutes of the 2-2 draw with Brighton. It was not immediately clear how serious the unspecified injury was. ...

Telasco Segovia, a 21-year-old making his first MLS start, had two goals and an assist as Inter Miami defeated the host Houston Dynamo, 4-1.

WINTER SPORTS

Brignone extends lead with super-G victory

Federica Brignone won a women's World Cup super-G in Kvitfjell, Norway, extending her lead in the overall standings.

In a tight finish, the Italian skier was 0.06 seconds faster than defending overall champion **Lara Gut-Behrami**.

Brignone's teammate **Sofia Goggia** was 0.09 behind in third, and **Alice Robinson** of New Zealand trailed by 0.22 in fourth.

Lindsey Vonn finished 1.11 seconds off the lead after a promising start. ...

Henrik Kristoffersen came from behind to win a men's World Cup slalom in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia.

The 2023 world champion stood sixth with 0.62 seconds to make up after the opening run, but his ninth-fastest time in the final run on a weakening course in the afternoon sunshine was enough for the victory.

Kristoffersen, who also won Saturday's giant slalom, led **Timon Haugan** by 0.17 for a Norwegian one-two finish.

MISC.

Parsons and Cowboys discussing extension

With Dallas Cowboys officials in Indianapolis for the NFL scouting combine, conversations have started with star pass rusher **Micah Parsons** about a contract extension, multiple people with knowledge of the discussions told the Dallas Morning News.

The conversations were described as general, the beginning of the process between the two sides.

Parsons, as part of the fifth-year option, will make \$24 million in the 2025 season. Among pass rushers, the San Francisco 49ers' **Nick Bosa** has the highest contract, worth \$170 million. ...

Pittsburgh freshman cornerback **Mason Alexander** died Saturday in a car crash in Indiana, authorities said.

Alexander, 18, was a passenger in a vehicle that swerved off the road and struck a tree in Fishers, according to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. The car burst into flames upon impact. Alexander was pronounced dead at the scene.

— *From news services and staff reports*

BASEBALL

After major changes, the Astros look to redefine success

Bregman is in Boston, Tucker and Pressly are in Chicago, Altuve is in left field, and Walker is at first base. A new era is beginning for Houston.

BY CHELSEA JANES

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA. — On a late February morning too inconsequential for cameras, on a back field too quiet to draw eyes of curious fans, Jose Altuve hustled around left field, learning when to let go. Line drives meant to test him sunk in front of him as first base coach Dave Clark yelled things such as, “Get there, Hosie!”

Every now and then, he held back too much, allowing catchable balls to drop. Every now and then, he charged too hard, still figuring out just how much ground a 34-year-old career second baseman can actually be expected to cover out there.

And while he had no time to consider it, catching his breath between reps, the metaphor posed by the aging face of a transitioning franchise was as glaring as the bright orange shirt on his back: The Astros, like Altuve, are trying to adapt to a new reality, figuring out how hard to chase the success that has defined them for a decade, not wanting to overrun the chance to start fresh before it is too late.

In the years since the Astros became one of baseball’s more polarizing modern dynasties, they have also become one of its more resilient. Little by little, pieces of championship years departed as George Springer, Carlos Correa and Justin Verlander (more than once) left in free agency. Every time, the Astros endured anyway.

By last year, only Altuve and Alex Bregman remained from the tarnished 2017 Houston lineup. Kyle Tucker, a more recent star, was nearing free agency. So when the Astros traded Tucker to the Chicago Cubs for Isaac Paredes



JEFF ROBERSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

With his range at second base diminished, Jose Altuve is adjusting to a new role in left field this spring.

and prospects, then dealt long-time closer Ryan Pressly to the Cubs, too, to save on his salary this winter, they looked like a team clearing the decks for a 2025 reset.

Then Bregman, another Astros lifer, signed with the Red Sox, seemingly a sign both that the Astros did not think spending big to cling to nostalgia was worth it and that Bregman thought Boston offered a better chance to win. The best years were over. The old Astros were gone. Time to let the ball drop for a year or two, to hold the hitter to a single instead of letting it roll to the wall.

But owner Jim Crane is not one to play any season on a hop. So

Astros General Manager Dana Brown signed first baseman Christian Walker to a three-year contract worth \$60 million, hardly the kind of deal doled out by a team ready to surrender. The Astros also pursued a trade for St. Louis Cardinals star third baseman Nolan Arenado, which fell through only when Arenado exercised his no-trade clause.

Their payroll will still be around \$200 million this year. Instead of trading free-agent-to-be starter Framber Valdez for what would almost certainly be an elite prospect return, they will hold him and let him anchor an always sturdy rotation again. If the Astros are a team in transi-

tion, they are not yet transitioning out of trying.

But like Altuve, they are working within new realities. Altuve’s range diminished in recent years, and the Astros have better defensive options at second. So they will try him in left field. Instead of a picture of Bregman or Correa or one of the other stars of recent years, an image of Walker sits outside the entrance to Houston’s spring training clubhouse, an acknowledgment that new must mix with old to keep familiar expectations within reach.

“I think whether we like to acknowledge it or not, it’s part of the business. Fans like to see players play in one place for their

entire careers, but it’s hard to do that these days,” Walker said. “There’s going to be a revolving door, and it’s not about replacing guys or talent. It’s about making the right moves and playing the game the Astros know how to play. Success feels very much expected again.”

But “success” might have a different definition now. Long-time starter Lance McCullers Jr. said so this spring when he looked around the room, saw Bregman and others gone, and said out loud what many around baseball wondered about the Astros all offseason.

“Maybe coming out of the chute, we’re a little bit more step-by-step: ‘Hey, let’s ... get out, get hot. Let’s put ourselves in this situation to win the West and then move to the playoffs,’” McCullers told the Athletic and others then, “versus showing up to camp and saying it’s World Series or bust.”

McCullers, the only other hold-over from that 2017 World Series team, threw to hitters Saturday on one of those back fields Altuve manned. Thanks to a variety of arm injuries, the veteran had not done that since October 2022.

Even with Verlander and Yusei Kikuchi gone in free agency, the Astros’ rotation still has many of the key pieces who helped them find a way again and again in recent years. Valdez is a Cy Young candidate when his mind is right. Luis Garcia and Cristian Javier will return from injury at some point this year.

Young starters such as Hunter Brown and Spencer Arrighetti helped the Astros recover from an abysmal start to make the post-season again in 2024. If McCullers can return to form, looking

like the right-hander with the great curveball and the 3.48 career ERA, he could help down the stretch. But after two lost seasons, the Astros know better than to count on him.

But McCullers is one of the old guard, one of the last remaining original Astros, so suddenly, in an organization often loaded with promising pitching talent, a dozen 93-mph fastballs during a throwing session became appointment viewing. Brown pressed his nose to the fence, turning now and then to analysts behind him to get feedback on the righty’s stuff. Maybe McCullers can be a bridge from the past to the Astros’ present, whatever that present is.

Altuve, too, is not quite sure. He started a Grapefruit League game in left field for the first time Friday, playing six innings in his first attempt to get used to a new position. The Cardinals did not hit, as he put it, “a single flyball or line drive or groundball” his way. He was disappointed. He will need to know what he can do out there before he and the Astros can be 100 percent certain he is ready to move.

“I was expecting one of those really high flyballs or something,” Altuve said. “Maybe next time.”

When his sixth inning in the field was over, Altuve did not jog into the dugout. He simply turned around and left through the bullpen door, a veteran move for a player who knows that’s much closer to the clubhouse. Experience still counts for something, and the Astros still have plenty of it. But like left field for Altuve, this particular Astros experience is new. They will not know whether they are ready for it until a ball is hit their way.

THOMAS BOSWELL

Being built on budget doesn’t mean Nats are poor in talent

BOSWELL FROM D1

than usual, I’ve never checked so many times on the status of a journeyman closer. But the Nats have done such savvy shopping all winter, filling total-void positions with short-contract, high-character vets, that it seemed a shame for the project to implode because of a pathetic bullpen.

The Nats now have a credible 26-man roster for \$68 million in a sport with no luxury tax until you hit \$241 million. Retired Stephen Strasburg eats up \$35 million more. As miracles go, it’s not feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. But it’s up there with balancing plates on sticks in a high wind.

When it comes to money, the Nats have problems. The Lerner’s, who own the team, are still very rich but not as wealthy as they used to be. Nobody in commercial real estate is as flush as they were before covid, work-from-home and haunted-house office buildings.

Worse, the Nationals’ finances are squeezed from both ends every year. The Nats and White Sox are the only teams with small-market revenue that MLB regards as large-market franchises. As a result, the Nats pay millions in revenue sharing every year to “poor” teams. Also, for 15 years the Nats and Orioles have fought over the proper amount of MASN rights fees owed to Washington. The combined effect is the Nats start each season with a sizable handicap.

The test of the Lerner’s willingness to spend enough to own a big league team will come when they are one top-of-the-rotation pitcher away from being a serious contender. That’s not now. But a “next Max Scherzer” moment will arrive someday. By then, the \$35 million-per-year Strasburg contract will be off the books and the MASN mess may be fixed. Then, no excuses. For now, we can hope this is the last penury payroll at Nationals Park.

In MLB, few problems are easy. But one kind can be fixed. If you are atrocious at a position, you can improve by two or three wins the next season just by progressing to “average.”

Last year, the Nats were heinous at first base, designated hitter and third base, as well as at Patrick Corbin’s rotation spot; he allowed more earned runs than any other pitcher in MLB, giving



THOMAS SIMONETTI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Nationals, despite their small budget, added some quality veterans to their promising young core.

the Nats a 11-21 record in his starts. Nats fans deserve angel wings for cheering his five years of 33-70, innings-eating work because he “always took the ball” — even if the ball wished otherwise.

With free agents Trevor Williams (2.03 ERA in 13 starts), Michael Soroka and Shinnosuke Ogasawara, the Nats now have seven starters — a glorious excess of adequacy — to pare down to five. And injury-plagued prospect Cade Cavalli is due in May.

If the replacements for Corbin have a mundane 4.25 ERA, the Nats’ run differential will improve by 27 runs. That’s worth three wins. Yes, there’s a formula for that.

Last year, Nats first basemen and designated hitters ranked near the bottom in homers at their position (with 14 and 16), but that was superlative compared with third base, where dark matter went to hide, with only seven. This year, Nathaniel Lowe, acquired in a trade from Texas, and free agents Josh Bell and Paul DeJong will fill those three spots. If they produce at their 2024 rates, they will add dozens of homers to the Nats’ total.

No, there isn’t a formula for translating home run increase to win-loss improvement. But it should be a fistful of games.

Also, Lowe is a Gold Glove first baseman, which will help sometimes scatter-armed shortstop CJ Abrams. DeJong played shortstop for years, so his skills should upgrade the defense at third.

When you’re searching the sofa cushions for payroll, you come up with ideas such as, “Hey, look — Amed Rosario can’t hit righties, but he has hit .298 with a .798 OPS against southpaws in 1,008

career at-bats.” So when the Nats see a lefty, you will see the \$2 million Rosario giving a day off to Luis García Jr., Abrams or Lowe, all lefty hitters, or righty DeJong, who has reverse splits.

In my subterranean wins above replacement computation dungeon, I have the Nats improved by about two wins at each of their three horror positions. That’s before you factor the value of having top prospect James Wood for a full season, not just half of one, and rookie Dylan Crews for a full year in right field.

This team has many ways to improve. If Keibert Ruiz stops swinging at everything except the rosin bag; if MacKenzie Gore pitches like his No. 2 stuff, not his No. 4 stats; if reliever Jose A. Ferrer matches his 2024 form, all that adds up.

The riskiest fun gamble is Soroka, who radically altered his pitch mix after being sent to the White Sox bullpen last summer, then flashed a 2.75 ERA. Two dozen clubs pursued him. But only the Nats promised the 6-foot-5 right-hander every opportunity to prove that, after two Achilles’ surgeries, he could get back to what he was at 21 — an all-star starting pitcher.

As much as the metrics mavens love Soroka, they hate Finnegan, whose spin rates and hard-hit percentages give them shivers. But, at times, the Nats still use “scout’s eyes” to ID bulldog relievers who shake off a few awful outings to finish with 38 saves in 43 opportunities like Finnegan.

“The 27th out is different. Some guys can get it. Some can’t,” Rizzo says. “Finnegan’s showed he can. We value that.”

But not a lot — at \$6 million. That’s all the budget allowed. So Rizzo spent months hoping

Finnegan, whom he slapped with a non-tender to avoid paying him \$8 million to \$9 million in arbitration, would endure that slight and return. The spinning plate stayed on the stick. Finnegan came back.

The Nats are still far from being a contender, especially in the National League East. But their camp really does have major talent. On Wednesday, Jarlin Susana’s fastball sat at 101 mph and touched 104. His curveball was 91. Like Crews last season, Plan A is for him to move through the minors fast, as a starting pitcher, and maybe get to D.C. by late in the season.

Because they only have one \$10 million player (Lowe, at \$10.3 million), the Nats are usually patted on the head as a team with nice promise but little present. So don’t ask much of them.

That’s wrong. If their bullpen copes, the Nats have the rotation depth and the lengthened lineup to be a pleasant surprise.

Hindsight bias — assuming the future will be a duplicate of the past — is heavy in MLB. But it shouldn’t be. Last year, the 12 teams that varied most from their 2023 performance either improved or collapsed by an average of 17 wins. The Royals soared by 30 wins. In 2023, the Rangers — losers in 2022 — improved by 12 wins and won the World Series. In baseball, it’s certainly better to be gaudy rich. But maybe not quite as much better as we think.

Nobody expected the Commanders or Capitals to be as good as they are. But look at ‘em. Sports offer a level of shock that’s available in few other places. The Nats, not paupers in talent, should visualize themselves joining that party.

For Crews, the eye test is still the best way to learn

NATIONALS FROM D1

for Crews, watching film is largely a pregame exercise. The top step of the dugout is his favorite place to learn. That is where he sees what the pitcher throws and whom they throw it to.

That is the simple stuff. The good stuff. The stuff that he needs to be ready. In spring training, he has recorded a hit in each of his five games.

Crews enters his first full season with the Nationals as one of the preseason favorites for National League rookie of the year honors. After 119 big league at-bats last season and thousands more throughout his life, the outfielder knows what he needs at the plate. Hitting is about anticipating, then reacting. As a handful of players (including Crews) in the Nationals’ clubhouse explained, a pitcher’s past tendencies are not always the best predictor of current tendencies.

The best way to guess what a pitcher will do in a game, they said — and stop if this sounds like rocket science — is to see what the pitcher is doing within that game.

Within a game, pitchers are liable to fall into certain traps. On a certain day, they can repeat certain sequences (fastball, fastball, slider, fastball) without realizing they’re doing it. Crews has 20/15 vision — better than the standard 20/20, so things that look far away to others look closer to him — which allows him to decipher a four-seam fastball, a sinker and a cutter from his seat. Pitchers can tip pitches based on their arm angle, how they hold their glove before they pitch or what type of breath they take before they throw.

“Usually it’s the older guys who pick up on those things,” Crews’ teammate Juan Yezpez said. Crews is the exception to the rule.

But he isn’t the only one with a complicated relationship with the table.

During the first cold stretch of Yezpez’s career, he would return to the iPad to look back at his mechanics, his hands and his elbows, only to realize it cluttered his mind at the plate. Josh Bell said he actually prefers not to know whether a pitcher is tipping his pitches — he considers himself an overaggressive hitter in those instances, more likely to swing at a pitch outside of the strike zone if he thinks he knows what is coming. Trey Lipscomb tries not to watch his own at-bats, preferring to rewatch his teammates’ at-bats so, like Crews, he can see whether he can pick up on the pitcher’s sequencing habits.

“I think there’s a lot of tools in the big leagues that can just shift

your mindset and your focus instead of ‘You’re here for a reason,’” Yezpez said. “You got the whole practice to focus on your mechanics. And when you’re in the game, just have fun and react and try to compete.”

“I think it’s really important to watch the game and not just have your eyes glued to an iPad, to your screen,” Bell said. “But if you can use it as a tool, then I’ve seen it help a lot of hitters fine-tune things.”

This isn’t to offer the impression that Crews swears off information from a screen. During games, there is still a quick look. Before Crews steps foot in the cage, he takes a look at the video to see who is pitching, how they handle success, how they handle pressure. He then will check his own swing and see whether everything is clean. Once that checklist is complete, he can go about his day.

“It’s making sure everything’s good, finding the happy medium and then just going out and playing,” Crews said.

Crews is looking to build on his limited major league experience last year. His underlying metrics, based on his quality of contact rather than the actual results, were stronger across the board than some so-so surface level numbers. His expected batting average was .253; his actual average was .218. His expected slugging percentage was .418 compared with his .353 actual mark. Still, there were vulnerabilities, namely a high groundball rate and some trouble with breaking balls.

Crews tried to attack every angle of his game in the offseason, his experience informed by his August call-up. He trained almost exclusively at LSU. He worked “down on the baseball” to create backspin. He worked on pitch recognition. He wanted to get in “baseball shape” rather than “weight room shape.”

For him, though, the top priorities were simplifying and watching.

“It’s a game of chess, really, just trying to be a couple steps ahead,” Crews said.

By the middle of the seventh inning Thursday night, spring training’s standard operating procedure was running just fine. The Nationals’ starting lineup, pulled from the game a half-inning earlier, had largely retreated from the bench. Play baseball, go home, rest up. They did it. But wait — there was Crews, still leaning on his elbows in the dugout with his eyes on the pitcher.

Perhaps he doesn’t need the information for any at-bats today. But he might find something to pocket for later.

DCSAA CLASS A BASKETBALL FINALS

Nothing but nets: Ramblers get cut of history with sweep

EASTERN 51,
GEORGETOWN DAY 38

BY MATT COHEN

After he had hugged his players and reached beneath his glasses to wipe tears from his eyes, Eastern boys' basketball coach Gary Johnson found Lonnie Harrell, the school's girls' coach, on the court at George Washington's Smith Center. Harrell was already wearing a net around his neck. His team had beaten Georgetown Day, 51-38, earlier Sunday in the D.C. State Athletic Association Class A girls' championship game.

Then it was Johnson's turn. His boys came back to beat KIPP Legacy, 50-43, in the Class A boys' final, making Eastern the first school to win both Class A titles in the same year. Johnson gave Harrell a hug and then went to take his turn cutting down the net. There was never a doubt that it was worth it for Harrell as he wore the net like a necklace outside his team's locker room. Two years ago, the Eastern girls didn't win a game. In need of a new coach, the school convinced Harrell, an alum, to come out of his coaching retirement following a successful tenure at Riverdale Baptist. In Eastern's first season under

Harrell, the Ramblers lost in the D.C. Interscholastic Athletic Association title game and fell in the semifinals of the DCSAA tournament. In his second season, Eastern (25-7) won the DCSAA Class A bracket for the first time since 2019. "Before the game, I was shaking. I couldn't keep still," Harrell said. "At the end, this is what it's about. This is what we want to do. I'm wearing this every day." Ten days earlier, senior Jayme Poindexter was in tears as she begrudgingly accepted the player of the year trophy after Eastern lost to Coolidge in the DCIAA title game. Harrell described her

as the "head of the snake" for Eastern, which entered the state tournament as the No. 1 seed. Not long after heartbreak, Poindexter was lifting a new championship trophy, screaming and beaming with pride. "Everything with me is just history," she said. "That's my legacy. When my name comes up, everyone will be like: 'She was a dog. She was that one.'" Junior Labrea Carter was the missing piece this winter. Carter came to Eastern from Riverdale Baptist and led the Ramblers with 17 points Sunday. Eastern got off to a quick start and never trailed against Georgetown Day (5-20). The Ramblers let their lead shrink to seven points in the

second half before pushing it back to double digits and never looking back. In the boys' game, Eastern junior Seyon Harsley had already played a key role in the comeback, but it wasn't until he drained a game-sealing three-pointer with under a minute left that he finally grasped what was about to happen. Harsley's face shifted from intensity to elation. He flexed his muscles as he looked up to the crowd. "Before this first states game, I kept saying it to myself all around the house.... I was telling my sibling, my mother, I said: 'I'm going to be a state champion. Y'all gonna have a state cham-

pion walking around this house,'" Harsley said. Eastern trailed by eight points in the third quarter against top-seeded KIPP. But the Ramblers outscored their opponent 19-9 in the fourth to surge to the title. Johnson came to Eastern at the same time as Harrell. He won DCIAA coach of the year honors this winter after leading Eastern to its first winning season since 2015-16. The Ramblers lost in the first round of the DCIAA tournament before turning around to win three DCSAA games in less than a week. "We just put in our talent, experience and try to put it forth for these kids to realize their dreams," Johnson said.



LUKE JOHNSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Junior Autumn Fleary made four three-pointers as Sidwell Friends won its third state title in four years.



LUKE JOHNSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Gonzaga saw all five of its starters score in double figures in dispatching Sidwell Friends on Sunday.

DCSAA CLASS AA GIRLS' BASKETBALL FINAL

Everything falls in the Quakers' favor

BY NOAH FERGUSON

All Tamika Dudley could do was shrug and smile. Standing on the sideline at George Washington's Smith Center in the third quarter of Sunday night's D.C. State Athletic Association Class AA girls' basketball title game, the Sidwell Friends coach had just watched junior Ava Yoon's corner three-pointer ricochet off the top of the backboard and swish improbably through the net. "It seemed like tonight everything wanted to fall our way," Dudley said. It was one of those nights for her hot-shooting Quakers, who closed their local schedule with a 72-44 rout of St. John's. No. 2 Sidwell made 14 of 28 three-pointers to secure the program's third state title in four years. Sunday's win avenged a heart-breaking overtime loss to the Cadets in last year's championship game. Sidwell junior Jordyn Jackson, a five-star recruit, led all scorers with 27 points, which was enough to earn championship game MVP honors. "I feel extremely grateful. I'm just so happy to be in this space and that I was able to win this for my teammates and my coaches," she said. "The first quarter was a little bit shaky, but we definitely got it going, and after that everything

SIDWELL FRIENDS 72,
ST. JOHN'S 44

14 threes help avenge
last year's loss to Cadets

went well." In the third quarter, Sidwell (27-3) overwhelmed St. John's (26-6), which hung around in the first half thanks to a strong start by junior Morgan Stewart. The Quakers stifled the No. 5 Cadets with a relentless press to start the second half, and the game quickly turned into a blowout. Sidwell outscored St. John's 26-10 in the third, ballooning its 10-point lead to 26. Yoon and junior Autumn Fleary made four three-pointers apiece, and Jackson knocked down three. Jackson spurred the third-quarter surge with a driving layup, which she followed later with a smooth midrange jumper. "I really got going, and I think that energy spreads to my teammates," Jackson said. "After that, everybody went off." Just one week after downing Bullis in the Independent School League championship game, the Quakers checked another box during a torrid late-season stretch. After enduring shooting struggles during the regular sea-

son, Dudley's team rounded into form come playoff time — Friday's semifinal victory over Maret was its seventh consecutive win. "We went through a moment in the regular season where we couldn't make a shot [and] went into a little bit of a slump," Dudley said. "I'm happy that we went through that adversity at the right time and the kids bounced back." With no seniors to turn to following the graduation of All-Met first-team picks Kendall Dudley and Zania Socka-Nguemen, a talented junior class lifted the Quakers back to Sunday's title game. While some of those players didn't contribute substantial minutes to last year's team, most remembered the feeling of walking off the court with their state title hopes dashed in painful fashion. "I said, 'Listen, we were here 365 days ago, and we didn't get the job done,'" Dudley said she told her players before the game. "So I kept telling them today, 'Don't leave with regret — leave it all on the floor.' ... They did a phenomenal job of that tonight." This year, it was the Quakers' turn to laugh, hug and cry with one another in celebration of a state title. One by one, they ascended a ladder and snipped off a piece of the net — and Dudley capped the revelry by swinging what remained of it over her head.

DCSAA CLASS AA BOYS' BASKETBALL FINAL

Eagles' seniors rise to the top as one

BY EMMETT SIEGEL

One by one, they walked off the court to a chorus of appreciation. First it was Christian Gurdak, then the trio of Derek Dixon, Nyk Lewis and Alex Toumou. Lastly, William Harper got his curtain call. He turned to the sideline and sauntered to the bench — but not before meeting Coach Steve Turner for a pat on the back as his teammates and fans applauded. These five Gonzaga seniors, all slated to play Division I basketball, have composed the Eagles' starting lineup since Gurdak arrived last season. They have garnered acclaim as one of the best teams — if not the best team — in the D.C. area. But they had never hoisted a championship trophy. That changed Sunday night at George Washington's Smith Center, where the No. 2 Eagles beat No. 4 Sidwell Friends, 67-51, to claim the D.C. State Athletic Association Class AA boys' basketball title for their first championship since 2020. "We've deserved this for a long time, and to finally do it after all the work we've put in, it's really something special," Harper said while waiting in line to cut down the net. "We've been together since the start. It really just means the world to all of us." This group remained determined to mark its legacy with a banner. Multiple trips to the

GONZAGA 67,
SIDWELL FRIENDS 51

First title since 2020
denies Quakers four-peat

Washington Catholic Athletic Conference title game, including this year, proved fruitless. With that as fuel, the Eagles (29-5) made it their mission to leave everything on the floor Sunday. "There's been a lot of ups and downs this season, but in life you have to know how to handle that," Lewis said. "We just had to take it on the chin, get back and just keep grinding." From the opening tip, it was Gonzaga's night, and the Eagles took a 35-21 lead to halftime. Gonzaga's energy was high, even in its sixth playoff game in nine days. To end the half, Lewis flipped the ball up the court to Toumou after a defensive rebound. The Harvard-bound standout capped 94 feet of picturesque transition basketball with a two-handed dunk as the buzzer sounded. Sidwell (24-6), which trailed in its semifinal matchup with St. John's before mounting a comeback, saw its short spurts of momentum stymied. It never led. Every blow it dealt was countered. The Quakers would find a spark, make a few baskets and

turn to the scoreboard — to find themselves still down double digits. All but two of Gonzaga's points came from its starters, all of whom finished in double figures. Toumou led the way with 15. "They just have five guys that can make plays," Sidwell Coach Eric Singletary said. "That's a great team. We knew it would be a tough challenge for us." In the previous three years, this was Sidwell's event: The Quakers entered Sunday seeking a four-peat. Singletary's program had earned the benefit of the doubt no matter its opponent. But Gonzaga has been the team to beat in D.C. all season. It entered the year as The Washington Post's No. 1 team and frequently found itself in the upper echelons of national rankings. That was the team that showed up Sunday. "I don't know that I've wanted a championship more for any team that I've ever coached," Turner said. "This is a special group, and I don't even know if I can put into words how special they are and what they mean to me." The Eagles are still hopeful they will be invited to a national postseason tournament. But these players, particularly the seniors, understand this may have been their last chance to take the court together. They walked off it together, too — finally on top.

BASEBALL NOTES

Yankees' LeMahieu, Tigers' Meadows among players dealing with injuries

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York Yankees third baseman DJ LeMahieu injured his left calf in his spring training debut. Serving as designated hitter, LeMahieu was injured Saturday night on his second at-bat in New York's 9-3 win over the Houston Astros. "That's not ideal, just with all that he's had to deal with," Manager Aaron Boone told reporters. "We'll see what we have there, and we'll see how significant it is. These soft tissue things have popped up on him, so it's at least a little concerning." It's the latest in a string of

injuries for the 36-year-old LeMahieu, who ended last season on the injured list with a right hip injury after missing the opening months of the season with a right foot fracture caused by a foul ball in spring training. Those injuries limited him to just 67 games last season, when he hit a career-worst .204 with just two homers and 26 RBI. LeMahieu, who has two years remaining on a six-year, \$90 million contract he signed in 2021, was the front-runner to be New York's everyday third baseman. If this injury keeps him out for an extended time, the Yankees will need Oswaldo Cabrera or Oswald

Peraza to step up to fill the position. •**TIGERS:** Center fielder Parker Meadows is out indefinitely with a nerve issue in his throwing arm. Manager A.J. Hinch said there is no timetable for his return from the issue in his upper right arm. The Tigers haven't ruled him out for Opening Day, but for now he can't do any baseball activities. Meadows was injured in Detroit's spring training opener Feb. 22 on a throw from center field. It took some time to pinpoint what the problem was before the Tigers announced that he would be out indefinitely.

The 25-year-old hit .244 with nine home runs and 28 RBI in 82 games last season. He played well in the postseason, batting .269 with a hit in each of the team's seven playoff games as the Tigers reached the American League Division Series. •**ROCKIES:** Left-hander Austin Gomber asked to be scratched from his scheduled start against the Seattle Mariners after reporting low arm speed and an issue with his throwing shoulder. Colorado isn't sure when he will be back but doesn't believe the issue is too serious. Gomber was scheduled to pitch three innings in what would have

been his second spring training appearance. The top speed on his fastball was 89.2 mph Tuesday against the Chicago White Sox after his four-seam fastball averaged 90.4 mph last season. The 31-year-old wasn't that concerned about the velocity but knew he didn't feel right. Gomber went 5-12 with a 4.75 ERA in a career-high 30 starts last season. •**BREWERS:** Former New York Mets general manager Billy Eppler is joining Milwaukee as a special adviser for scouting and baseball operations. Eppler was suspended last year after an MLB investigation con-

cluded he directed Mets staff to fabricate injuries to create open roster spots, but that punishment expired after the 2024 World Series. He resigned as the Mets' general manager in October 2023 amid that investigation, three days after owner Steve Cohen hired David Stearns as president of baseball operations. Stearns held the president of baseball operations title with the Brewers before he stepped down at the end of the 2022 season. •**CARDINALS:** Left-hander Zack Thompson has a lat strain and will be shut down for three to four weeks.

JERRY BREWER

For Commanders, acquiring the tenacious Samuel is a small risk worth taking

BREWER FROM D1

declining player. In the past three seasons, he hasn't come close to his peak 2021 numbers: 77 receptions, 1,405 receiving yards, 365 rushing yards and 14 total touchdowns. In 2024, he caught 51 passes for 670 yards and three touchdowns. He rushed for 136 yards and a touchdown. Since that monster 2021 season, Samuel has averaged 3.9 receptions and 51 receiving yards per game.

So Washington isn't getting a superstar. But if Samuel does nothing more than replicate his 2024 numbers, he would be a valuable No. 2 wide receiver. The threat of his game-breaking ability would take some pressure off Terry McLaurin, who I believe has a 100-catch, 1,500-yard season in him. Let's also not forget the Jayden Daniels factor: More weapons, especially when they have the versatility, football intelligence and big-game experience that Samuel has, are necessary to help the young quarterback stay ahead of a league adjusting to him.

In addition, Daniels proved to be an enhancer during his sensational rookie season. He combined accuracy and decision-making with otherworldly talent to make the offense better than it should have been. If all goes well, Daniels is exactly the kind of quarterback Samuel needs at this point in his career — someone who can make his life easier.

Earlier in his time with San Francisco, Samuel was a weapon that Coach Kyle Shanahan leveraged to both test and scare defenses, which opened up the field for others and made the offense even more quarterback-



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deebo Samuel's stats have dipped in recent years, but his versatility, toughness and experience could help Jayden Daniels's development.

friendly. Later, the 49ers acquired Christian McCaffrey, one of the best receiving running backs in NFL history. The combination of McCaffrey and Samuel defied positional norms and redefined an offense already blessed with a brilliant play caller, a sturdy offensive line, a

superstar tight end in George Kittle and an emerging young wide receiver in Brandon Aiyuk.

Adam Peters, Washington's general manager, helped build that machine as a lieutenant in the 49ers' front office. He was the vice president of player personnel when San Francisco

selected Samuel with a second-round pick in 2019. He jumped at the chance to borrow from his past to create something new.

Peters, Coach Dan Quinn and the others leading the organization have had success recasting veterans they know well. It happened when Quinn

reunited with middle linebacker Bobby Wagner. Kingsbury turned to Zach Ertz and invigorated the tight end's career. Such players were integral to Washington's quick turnaround. With his Samuel reunion, Peters is making a more expensive effort to fortify the

Commanders' identity as a relentless team that will fight for all four quarters.

It's a shrewd bet. The Commanders didn't ignore other areas of need (pass rush, for instance) to acquire a luxury toy. They're not doing something pretty to avoid the dirty work of roster construction. And I don't think they're viewing this as their most significant move of the offseason, either. It just wound up being the first thing they could do. When the picture is complete, Samuel won't be an outlier. He'll look just fine next to everything they accomplish because the goal is to find tough, uncompromising players who make the Commanders a greater pain to face. They need to get faster, especially on defense, but they need more tenacity everywhere.

The Commanders didn't prioritize Samuel because they dream about him turning back the clock. They're comfortable with who he is now and how valuable that can be. Samuel is another veteran well suited to model the grit they hope sustains them. With Samuel in the final year of his contract, it can be a good temporary partnership. It's not an all-in move, but it's an all-out one because Samuel doesn't do anything at half speed. For a team that specialized in outlasting opponents, Samuel is a good fit.

Misguided teams buy jewelry as soon as their fortunes change. As the Commanders balance dueling desires to satisfy growing expectations and stay disciplined for long-term success, they just traded for a competitor who has made a name — Deebo — by snatching someone else's chain.



GRAEME SLOAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sarah Te-Biasu nails the game-winner in the final seconds of overtime Sunday as Maryland stunned Ohio State in its regular season finale.

Terps lock up the No. 4 seed in Big Ten tournament

MARYLAND FROM D1

tournament; it was left off both NCAA top 16 reveals in recent weeks. The Terps are the No. 4 seed in the Big Ten tournament in Indianapolis; they received a double bye and will tip off in the quarterfinals Friday afternoon against Michigan, Washington or Minnesota.

Illinois' loss earlier Sunday locked Maryland into the No. 4 seed. USC (26-2, 17-1) secured the No. 1 seed with an 80-67 victory over UCLA on Saturday night; the Bruins (27-2, 16-2) settled for the No. 2 spot. Ohio State (24-5, 13-5) is the No. 3 seed.

"This is what a great team looks like, where just everyone made plays throughout the game," Maryland Coach Brenda Frese said. "Clearly our body of work speaks for itself — five wins over ranked teams, 10-1 on the road, 13-5 in the toughest confer-

ence in the country. We'll see what the future looks like. Clearly we want to be able to host [in the NCAA tournament], but if we just continue to separate ourselves with these kind of wins and going into the Big Ten tournament, it's great momentum for us."

Maryland got revenge after its January loss at Ohio State despite still being banged up. Two of Maryland's most important players arrived together at the arena about 90 minutes before the game — Saylor Poffenbarger in a walking boot and Bri McDaniel on crutches. McDaniel is out for the season with a torn right ACL; Poffenbarger is considered day-to-day.

Then things got worse. Early in the third quarter, Sellers hit the floor while attempting a spinning layup. She was carried off the court but quickly returned to the bench and checked back into

the game. Aggravating the right knee sprain that has bothered her in recent weeks wasn't going to keep her from returning to what may have been her Xfinity Center farewell.

"It means everything to be here and to play here," she said. "Obviously, a lot of greats have walked through these doors. I've just enjoyed every moment of it. It's surreal, but if this is it, what a way to go out."

The teams went back and forth throughout; neither team led by more than one point at the end of the second, third and fourth quarters, and neither ever led by double digits. Sellers had the last chance at the end of regulation, but instead the teams went to overtime with the score tied at 78.

Smikle got to the rim at will in the fourth, scoring 11 of her game-high 26 points in the quarter. She denied a Kennedy Cam-

bridge jumper in the paint with 18 seconds left in overtime and Maryland leading by one; the officials ruled it a jump ball after Cambridge came down with it.

Allie Kubek (17 points), starting in place of Poffenbarger, split a pair of free throws for a two-point lead with 14 seconds left. Ohio State's Madison Greene (12 points) hit a layup with seven seconds left to tie the score at 90 and set up Te-Biasu's heroics.

Taylor Thierry led Ohio State with 21 points, and Ajae Petty had 12 points and 10 rebounds. Te-Biasu made sure that wasn't enough.

"I was proud of the way we played from a competitive-character standpoint," Ohio State Coach Kevin McGuff said. "I thought our physical effort was good, but we had too many self-inflicted [mistakes] to win in this game against a really good Maryland team."

George realizes potential on defense for Wizards

WIZARDS FROM D1

But he also saw the virtue in Poole's words.

"You can't keep calling ticky-tack fouls all the time," George said.

The Switzerland native already grades out well by defensive metrics: Opponents shoot 3.3 percent worse than their average with George defending, the 13th-best mark in the league among non-centers who have faced at least 500 shots, according to NBA.com. Washington allows 2.2 fewer points per 100 possessions with him on the court, per Cleaning the Glass.

George has become more disruptive as the season has progressed. Since the start of February, he is in the 100th percentile among wings in the percentage of shots he blocks and in the 73rd percentile in steal percentage, according to Cleaning the Glass.

"I think I'm starting to get the ins and outs — when I can reach, when I can't reach and how to reach also. I think that changes from college, too," he said Feb. 22. "... You play against more skilled players, so they know how to position the ball differently."

George also has been a strong rebounder, ranking in the 89th percentile in defensive rebounding percentage since Feb. 1, per Cleaning the Glass. He showcased seemingly all of his skills late in a Feb. 21 loss to Giannis Antetokounmpo's Milwaukee Bucks.

The Wizards trailed by 10 points with under five minutes left but had multiple chances to tie the score in large part because of George. The rookie stymied Antetokounmpo on a drive, finishing the possession with a block. Under a minute later, George swiped down against AJ Green for a steal. He also grabbed five rebounds in the final 3:36.

Coach Brian Keefe on the defense that George and others

WIZARDS' NEXT THREE

at Miami Heat

Monday 7:30 Monumental 2

vs. Utah Jazz

Wednesday 7 Monumental

at Toronto Raptors

Saturday 7:30 Monumental

Radio: WTEM (980 AM)

played on Antetokounmpo that night: "[They] fought him. ... That's the grittiness and toughness we want to show as we grow as a team."

Champagne getting new deal

The Wizards are working toward a four-year contract extension worth about \$10 million for wing Justin Champagne, according to multiple people familiar with the situation. ESPN first reported the deal Sunday.

Champagne, 23, is in his fourth NBA season after going undrafted in 2021. He was on a two-way contract.

Champagne has played a career-best 40 games and is averaging career highs in minutes (18.3), points (7.5) and rebounds (4.6). He is shooting a career-best 37.6 percent from three-point range, a skill he said earlier this season was his main focus since he entered the professional ranks.

The Brooklyn native had bounced around the NBA and its developmental affiliate, the G League, before he joined the Wizards in February 2024 on a 10-day contract. He agreed to a two-way deal that March. He started this season outside Keefe's rotation but has seen consistent minutes in recent weeks.

Champagne's twin brother, Julian, plays for the San Antonio Spurs. He tweeted out his congratulations Sunday: "Proud ain't even the word."



NELL REDMOND/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wizards rookie Kyshawn George has stepped up his defensive fortitude against opponents such as the Hornets' Nick Smith Jr.

Trustees Sale - DC **Trustees Sale - DC**
4600 CONNECTICUT AVE NW #211,
WASHINGTON DC 20008

In execution of the Superior Court for the District of Columbia's Decree of Sale in Case: 2024-CAB-002334 the undersigned Trustee(s) will offer for sale the property known as 4600 CONNECTICUT AVE NW #211, WASHINGTON DC 20008 at a public auction within the offices of HARVEY WEST AUCTIONEERS, INC. 5335 Wisconsin Avenue NW Suite 440, Washington, DC 20015 202-463-4567 On **MARCH 11, 2025 AT 11:00 A.M.** the land and premises situated in the District of Columbia, and designated as and being Lot 2026 in Square 1977, and more particularly described in the Deed of Trust recorded in the Land Records of the District of Columbia, on OCTOBER 28, 2019 as Instrument Number: 2019110441 the property will be sold by Trustee's 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 the lesser of \$35,000.00 or 10% of the sale price will be required at time of sale in cash or certified funds. The deposit required to bid at the auction is waived for the Noteholder and any of its successors or assigns. The Noteholder may bid up to the credit and may submit a written bid to the Trustee which shall be announced at sale. The balance of the purchase price is to be paid in cash within 45 days of final ratification of the sale by the Court.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. If purchaser fails to settle within the aforesaid forty five (45) days of the ratification, the purchaser agrees to pay the Trustees' reasonable attorney fees as ordered by the Court, plus all costs incurred, if the Trustees have filed the appropriate motion with the Court to resell the property. Purchaser waives personal service of any paper filed with the Court in connection with this motion and any Cause of Action, and agrees to pay the Court and expressly agrees to accept service of any such paper or Order by certified mail and regular mail sent to the address provided by the purchaser and as recorded on the documents executed by the purchaser at the time of the sale. Service shall be deemed effective upon the purchaser 3 days after postmarked by the United States Post Office. It is expressly agreed by the purchaser that actual receipt of the certified mail is not required for service to be effective. If the purchaser fails to go to settlement the deposit shall be forfeited to the Trustees and all expenses of this sale (including attorney fees and full commission on the gross sales price of the sale) shall be charged against and paid from the forfeited deposit. In the event of resale the defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to any surplus proceeds or profits resulting from any resale of the property regardless of any improvements made to the real property. Interest is to be paid on the unpaid purchase money at the rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date the funds are received in the office of the Trustees. In the event that the settlement is delayed for ANY REASON WHATSOEVER, there shall be no abatement of interest. Taxes, water rent, condominium fees and/or homeowner association dues, all public charges/assessments payable on an annual basis, including sanitary and/or metropolitan district charges, if applicable, to be adjusted for the current year to date of sale and assumed thereafter by the purchaser. Purchaser shall be responsible for the costs of all transfer taxes, documentary stamps and all other costs incident to settlement. Purchaser shall be responsible for physical possession of the property. Purchaser assumes the risk of loss from the date of sale forward. The sale is subject to post sale audit by the Mortgage Lender to determine whether the borrower filed bankruptcy, entered into a repayment/forbearance agreement, reinstated or paid off prior to sale. In any such event the Purchaser agrees that upon notification by the Trustees of such event the sale is null and void and of no legal effect and the deposit returned without interest. Trustees' File No 23-002017

JAMES E. CLARKE AND DANIEL K. EISENHAUER
 SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES

C/O ORLANDS PC
 1602 Village Market Blvd SE, Suite 310
 Leesburg, VA 20175
 (703) 777-7101



Feb 10,17,24,Mar 3, 2025 001248218

Gordon Feinblatt LLC
 1001 Fleet Street, Suite 700
 Baltimore, Maryland 21202

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF FOUR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES
3610 MINNESOTA AVENUE S.E.,
3501-3541 EAST CAPITOL STREET S.E.,
27 25TH STREET S.E., &
3425 EAST CAPITOL STREET S.E.,
WASHINGTON, DC 20019

SALE AT 3425 A STREET S.E. IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM

Under a power of sale contained in a Deed of Trust and Security Agreement (the "Deed of Trust") dated August 30, 2023 and recorded on August 31, 2023 as Instrument No. 2023075634, default having occurred under the terms of the Deed of Trust, and following the recording of a Deed of Removal of Trustees and Appointment of Substitute Trustees as Instrument No. 2025012174, Affidavits of Non-Residential Mortgage Foreclosure as Instrument Nos. 2025012160, 2025012174, 2025012179, and 2025012208, and Notices of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property or Condominium Unit as Instrument Nos. 2025012141, 2025012170, 2025012186, and 2025012184, at the request of the party secured by the Deed of Trust, the Substitute Trustees will sell at public auction in the community room of 3425 A Street S.E., Washington, DC 20019, on

MARCH 12, 2025 AT 11:00 AM

All that fee simple lot of ground, together with any buildings or improvements thereon located in the City of Washington, District of Columbia and more fully described in the Deed of Trust, the improvements being known as 3610 Minnesota Avenue S.E., Washington, D.C. 20019, Square 3412, Lot 801, 127 25th Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20019, Square 3413, Lot 802, and 3425 East Capitol Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20019, and all other interests in, and all rights in, and all claims, rights and interest to any such excess amount and shall not be entitled to any distribution whatsoever from the resale proceeds or a return of any portion of the purchaser's forfeited deposit.

TERMS OF SALE: This advertisement, as amended or supplemented by any oral announcement made at the time of sale, shall be a part of the contract which the Property shall be offered for sale, sold, or purchased. The Properties will be sold in "AS IS" condition and without recourse, representation or warranty, expressed or implied, of any kind. The purchaser shall be solely responsible for the condition of the Property. The Properties will be sold subject to (i) all conditions, liens, restrictions, rights of redemption, covenants, encumbrances, and agreements of record relating to the sale, and (ii) all other conditions, liens, restrictions, rights of redemption, covenants, encumbrances, and agreements of record relating to the sale, and (iii) the rights of any tenants in possession of any portion of the Properties under any recorded or unrecorded lease and (iv) such state of facts that an accurate survey or physical inspection of the Properties might disclose.

Each Property will be offered individually, in combination, and as an entirety. The Substitute Trustees will accept any bid or bids that result in the highest total bid for the Properties. For each Property, a \$250,000 deposit shall be required at the time of sale, and the deposit shall be in the form of a cashier's check drawn on a bank acceptable to the Substitute Trustees. The deposit will not be earned in the hands of the Substitute Trustee until the purchaser increases the deposit to ten percent (10%) of the bid price within two (2) business days of the time of sale. If the purchaser fails to increase the funds wire transfer to the Substitute Trustees. The party secured by the Deed of Trust (the "Secured Party") or any affiliate thereof, if a bidder, is not required to post a deposit or to pay interest on the unpaid purchase money. If the Secured Party purchases a Property or the Properties at the sale, the amount bid by the Secured Party, after deducting all expenses related to the sale, shall be a credit against the indebtedness secured by the Deed of Trust.

The balance of the purchase price, with interest at the rate set forth in the Promissory Note, shall be paid by cash, cashier's check, or another acceptable form of payment, which must occur within thirty (30) days following the sale. Interest will accrue from the date of sale until the date the funds are received by NM Commercial Title, LLC, the closing agent for the Substitute Trustees. There shall be no abatement of interest if settlement is delayed.

The purchaser shall be responsible for, and take title to each Property subject to, all taxes, public charges, assessments, water and sewer charges, other utility charges, and all expenses of the Property, accrued before or after the sale. The purchaser waives any cause of action it may have against the Substitute Trustees, the Secured Party, and their affiliates for any condition of a Property that may not comply with any federal, state or local law, regulation, or ruling. The purchaser has not relied on the forecasted appraisement, marketing, or promotional materials concerning the condition of the Properties. The Purchaser shall pay all closing costs, including without limitation deed preparation, recordation taxes and charges, settlement fees, and title insurance premiums. All rents, without proration for the current month, collected to the day prior to closing shall remain the property of the Secured Party. All rents, without proration for the current month, and any delinquent rents, collected on or after the day of closing shall be the property of the purchaser. All obligations of the purchaser hereunder shall survive closing and delivery of the deed. Neither the Substitute Trustees nor the Secured Party, nor any other party, covenant to deliver security deposits to the purchaser. The purchaser (other than the Secured Party) shall sign a promissory note including this advertisement, any verbal announcements at the sale, and other terms, which will be available to prospective bidders at the time. Sale is of the essence.

For each Property purchased by the purchaser, the purchaser shall deliver to the Substitute Trustees, within seven (7) days following the sale, an insurance certificate confirming that the purchaser has obtained casualty and liability insurance coverage on the Property, naming the Substitute Trustees and the Secured Party as additional insured parties on the policy, and otherwise in form and content acceptable to the Substitute Trustees. The failure of the purchaser to provide such evidence of insurance coverage shall constitute grounds for nullifying and voiding the sale. The Substitute Trustees reserve the right to require registration and/or pre-qualification of bidders, to modify or waive the requirements for bidders' deposits, to approve the creditworthiness of any bidder, to withdraw any Property from sale, to cancel the sale, to use an agent or attorney to conduct the sale, to reject any and all bids, and to postpone the sale and keep the bidding open for any length of time.

If the purchaser defaults, the Substitute Trustees may retain the deposit as liquidated damages, resell any Property purchased by the defaulting purchaser at its risk and cost, and recover any deficiency in the purchase price, all costs and expenses of both sales and attorneys' fees, and related expenses, or avail themselves of any other legal or equitable remedies available to them. The defaulting purchaser shall be entitled to any surplus from the resale, even if such surplus is due to improvements made by the defaulting purchaser.

If the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey any Property by reason of any defect in the title or otherwise, the purchaser shall be returned the purchase price and the purchase price shall be returned to the purchaser. The sale shall be void and of no effect. The conveyance by the Substitute Trustees to the purchaser at settlement shall be by Substitute Trustees' Deed, without covenant or warranty.

NOTE: The information contained herein is offered for informational purposes only and there are no warranties with respect to the accuracy of such information. For additional information, please contact David S. Musgrave, Substitute Trustee, (410) 574-1134, dmusgrave@tfr.com or Stephen Karbelik, auctioneer, RealMarkets, a CENTURY 21 Commercial New Millennium team, (571) 481-1037 or stephen@realmarkets.com

David S. Musgrave & Natalie C. Gibson,
 Substitute Trustees

Feb 28,Mar 3,5,7,10, 2025 001248567

Trustees Sale - DC **Trustees Sale - DC**
WASHINGTON GLOBAL LAW GROUP, PLLC
1701 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW, SUITE 200
WASHINGTON, DC 20006

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE'S SALE
RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM UNIT
1010 25TH STREET, NW, UNIT #311
WASHINGTON, DC 20037

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust dated July 17, 2015 from Jordan Margaret Norma Fisher ("Borrower"), to the trustees named therein and recorded on July 23, 2015 among the records of the Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia (the "Records") as Document No. 2015075288 (the "Deed of Trust"), the holder of the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust ("Noteholder") having subsequently appointed Eileen M. O'Brien, as Substitute Trustee ("Trustee") in the place of the original trustees under the Deed of Trust by a Deed of Appointment of Substitute Trustees recorded on November 7, 2024 as Document No. 2024103531 among the Records, default having occurred under the terms of the Deed of Trust and at the request of the Noteholder, and pursuant to a Notice of Foreclosure Sale of Real Property or Condominium Unit filed on January 29, 2025 as Document No. 2025009861 among the Records in accordance with D.C. Code § 42-815 and the applicable laws of the District of Columbia, the Trustee will offer for sale to the highest qualified bidder at a public auction within the office of ALEX COOPER AUCTIONEERS, INC., 4910 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 100, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016 on

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025
at 11:15 AM

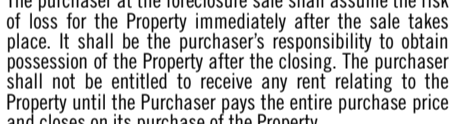
the following described land and premises (the "Land"): Part of Lot (50) in Square (15) in a subdivision made by Swarthmore Tenants Limited Partnership, as per plan recorded in Liber 172 at folio 1, in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia, more particularly designated as Unit No. 311, of "THE SWARTHMORE CONDOMINIUM, A CONDOMINIUM".

Said property being known for assessment and taxation purposes as Lot 2163 in Square 15.

TERMS OF SALE

Summary terms of sale: A deposit in the amount of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00), payable by certified or cashier's check, will be required at the time of sale and at the time and place of sale. Within two (2) business days after the date of the sale, the purchaser of the Property shall deliver a certified or cashier's check to the Trustee to increase the purchaser's deposit to an amount that is equal to ten percent (10%) of the full amount bid by such purchaser at the sale. The balance of the purchase price, together with interest thereon at the default rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date of settlement, shall be due from the purchaser by wire transfer or certified check within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of sale, upon final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court of MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND interest to be paid at the rate of 5.125 % on unpaid purchase money from date of sale to date of settlement. The secured party herein, if a bidder, shall not be required to post a deposit. Third party purchaser (excluding the secured party) will be required to complete full settlement of the purchase of the property within TEN (10) CALENDAR DAYS of the ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court otherwise the purchaser's deposit shall be forfeited and the property will be resold at the risk and expense of the defaulting purchaser. All other public charges and private charges or assessments, including water/sewer charges, ground rent taxes, if any, to be adjusted to date of sale. Cost of all documentary stamps and transfer taxes and all other costs incident to the settlement shall be borne by the purchaser. If applicable, condominium and/or homeowner association dues and assessments will be adjusted to date of sale. If the sale is rescinded or not ratified for any reason, including post sale lender audit, or the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey insurable title or a resale is to take place for any reason, the purchaser(s) sole remedy in law or equity shall be limited to the refund of the aforementioned deposit. The purchaser waives all rights and claims against the Substitute Trustees whether known or unknown. These provisions shall survive settlement Upon refund of the deposit, this sale shall be void and of no effect, and the purchaser shall have no further claim against the Substitute Trustees. The sale is subject to post-sale review of the status of the loan and that if any agreement to cancel the sale was entered into by the lender and borrower prior to the sale then the sale is void and the purchaser's deposit shall be refunded without interest. Additional terms and conditions, if applicable, may be announced at the time and place of sale. Sale is subject to the attestation by the Borrower and the Trustee in accordance with Section A of the Governor's order of 10.16.2020. File No. (24-02911)

BRENNAN FERGUSON, JOHN C. HANRAHAN, JEREMY B. WILKINS, AMANDA DISCOLE, ROBERT OLIVERI, PAUL HEINMULLER, Substitute Trustees



Feb 24,Mar 3,10, 2025 0012485057

Prince Georges County
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

Diane S. Rosenberg
Mark D. Meyer
 6340 East West Highway,
 Suite 600
 Bethesda, MD 20814
 Substitute Trustee
 Plaintiff(s)

Stuart A. Waters
 405 Pritchard Lane,
 Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
 Defendant(s)

Case No. C-16-CV-23-001426

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given this 27 day of February, 2025 by the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland, that the sale of 405 Pritchard Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774, made and reported, will be ratified and confirmed, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the 30 day of March, 2025. The report states the amount of sale to be \$336,000.00.

Mahasin El Amin
 Clerk of the Circuit Court
 Prince George's County,
 Maryland

FILE NUMBER:22-001556-MD-F-2
 Mar 3,10,17, 2025 001248599

Feb 24,26,28,Mar 3,5, 2025 0012485392

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Montgomery County **Montgomery County**
Brock and Scott, PLLC
 5431 Oleander Drive
 Wilmington NC, 28403

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF VALUABLE FEE SIMPLE PROPERTY
 KNOWN AS
7915 Eastern Avenue APT 709
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust to DONALD W. COURTNEY, Trustee(s), dated June 22, 2011, and recorded among the Land Records of MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND in Liber 41862 - folio 196, the holder of the indebtedness secured by this Deed of Trust having appointed the undersigned Substitute Trustees, by instrument duly recorded among the aforesaid Land Records, default having occurred under the terms thereof, and at the request of the party secured thereby, the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction at THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE LOCATED AT 50 MARYLAND AVENUE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850 ON,

MARCH 12, 2025 at 11:00 AM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND and improvements thereon situated in MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD and described as follows:

CONDOMINIUM UNIT NO. 709 (THE UNIT) TOGETHER WITH THE COMMON ELEMENTS APPURTENANT THERETO, IN THE AURORA CONDOMINIUM SOUTH, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND, PURSUANT TO THE DECLARATION OF CONDOMINIUM RECORDED IN LIBER 31561 AT FOLIO 418 ET SEQ., AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND AND THE CONDOMINIUM PLAT RECORDED AT PLAT NO. 8990, AS AMENDED BY THAT CORRECTIVE AMENDMENT TO DECLARATION FOR AURORA SOUTH CONDOMINIUM RECORDED IN LIBER 31591 AT FOLIO 247. PARCEL ID: 13-03519755

The property will be sold in an "AS IS WHERE IS" condition without either express or implied warranty or representation, including but not limited to the description, fitness for a particular purpose or use, structural integrity, physical condition, construction, extent of construction, workmanship, materials, liability, zoning, subdivision, environmental condition, merchantability, compliance with building or housing codes or other laws, ordinances or regulations, or other similar matters, and subject to easements, agreements and restrictions of record which affect the same, if any. The property will be sold subject to all conditions, liens, restrictions and agreements of record affecting same including any condominium and of HOA assessments pursuant to Md Real Property Article 11-110.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$19,500.00 payable in certified check or by a cashier's check will be required from purchaser at time of sale, balance in immediately available funds upon final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court of MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND interest to be paid at the rate of 5.125 % on unpaid purchase money from date of sale to date of settlement. The secured party herein, if a bidder, shall not be required to post a deposit. Third party purchaser (excluding the secured party) will be required to complete full settlement of the purchase of the property within TEN (10) CALENDAR DAYS of the ratification of the sale by the Circuit Court otherwise the purchaser's deposit shall be forfeited and the property will be resold at the risk and expense of the defaulting purchaser. All other public charges and private charges or assessments, including water/sewer charges, ground rent taxes, if any, to be adjusted to date of sale. Cost of all documentary stamps and transfer taxes and all other costs incident to the settlement shall be borne by the purchaser. If applicable, condominium and/or homeowner association dues and assessments will be adjusted to date of sale. If the sale is rescinded or not ratified for any reason, including post sale lender audit, or the Substitute Trustees are unable to convey insurable title or a resale is to take place for any reason, the purchaser(s) sole remedy in law or equity shall be limited to the refund of the aforementioned deposit. The purchaser waives all rights and claims against the Substitute Trustees whether known or unknown. These provisions shall survive settlement Upon refund of the deposit, this sale shall be void and of no effect, and the purchaser shall have no further claim against the Substitute Trustees. The sale is subject to post-sale review of the status of the loan and that if any agreement to cancel the sale was entered into by the lender and borrower prior to the sale then the sale is void and the purchaser's deposit shall be refunded without interest. Additional terms and conditions, if applicable, may be announced at the time and place of sale. Sale is subject to the attestation by the Borrower and the Trustee in accordance with Section A of the Governor's order of 10.16.2020. File No. (24-02911)

BRENNAN FERGUSON, JOHN C. HANRAHAN, JEREMY B. WILKINS, AMANDA DISCOLE, ROBERT OLIVERI, PAUL HEINMULLER, Substitute Trustees



Feb 24,Mar 3,10, 2025 0012485057

Prince Georges County
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

Brennan Ferguson, et al.
Substitute Trustees
 Plaintiffs,
 v.
Jason Jeremy Browner,
 Defendant.

Case No. C-16-CV-24-005225

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given this 21 day of February, 2025 that the sale of the property in this case, 12807 Jackson Dr, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744, made and reported, will be ratified and confirmed, unless cause to the contrary be shown on or before the 21 day of March, 2025. The report states the amount of sale to be \$318,000.00.

Mahasin El Amin
 Clerk of the Circuit Court
 Prince George's County,
 Maryland

FILE NUMBER:22-001556-MD-F-2
 Mar 3,10,17, 2025 001248599

Mar 3,4,5,6,7, 2025 0012486191

This is a communication from a debt collector.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
 SAMUEL I. WHITE, PC. (90885)
 448 Viking Drive Suite 350
 Virginia Beach, VA 23452
 757-457-1460 - Call Between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
 or visit our website at www.siwpc.net

Mar 3,4,5,6,7, 2025 0012486191

Prince Georges County **Prince Georges County**
ORLANDS PC
 1602 VILLAGE MARKET BLVD. SE, SUITE 310
 LEESBURG, VA 20175
 703-777-7101

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY
5612 KAVEH COURT
UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20772

Under a power of sale contained in a Deed of Trust from GAILUNITTE HOWARD, dated November 26, 2012 and recorded in Liber 34221, folio 372 among the Land Records of PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD, default having occurred thereunder (Foreclosure Case docketed as Case No.CAE19-08634; Tax ID No.15-3711041) the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COURTHOUSE, located at FRONT OF THE DUVAL WING OF THE COURTHOUSE COMPLEX 14735 MAIN ST, UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20772, on

MARCH 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND and improvements thereon situated in PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD and more fully described in above referenced Deed of Trust.

THE PROPERTY IS SUBJECT TO AN IRS RIGHT OF REDEMPTION.

The property 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 \$40,000.00 will be required at the time of sale, such deposit to be in CERTIFIED CHECK OR BY CASHIER'S CHECK. CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten (10) days of final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD. If the purchaser defaults, the deposit shall be forfeited and the property shall be resold at the purchaser's risk and expense. The purchaser waives personal service and accepts service by first class mail and certified mail addressed to the Memorandum of Sale for any Motion or Show Cause Order incident to this sale including a Motion to Default Purchaser and for Resale of the Property. In the event of a resale, the defaulting purchaser shall not be entitled to receive any benefit from the resale, including, but not limited to, additional proceeds or surplus which may arise therefrom. 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 by the Substitute Trustees. There will be no abatement of interest in the event additional funds are tendered at the time of sale or any time prior to settlement or if the settlement is delayed for any reason. In the event that the Secured Party executes a forbearance agreement with the borrower(s) described in the above-mentioned Deed of Trust, or allows the borrower(s) to execute their right to reinstate the secured loan, prior to the date of sale, with or without the Substitute Trustee's prior knowledge, this Contract shall be null and void and of no effect, and the Purchaser's sole remedy shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Purchaser shall pay for documentary stamps, transfer taxes and settlement expenses. Taxes, ground rent, water rent, condominium fees and/or homeowner association dues, all public charges/assessments payable on an annual basis, including sanitary and/or metropolitan district charges, if applicable, shall be adjusted to the date of sale and assumed thereafter 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. If the Substitute Trustee(s) are unable to convey insurable title for any reason, the purchaser(s) sole remedy in law or equity shall be limited to a refund of the aforementioned deposit without interest. In the event the sale is not ratified for any reason, the Purchaser's sole remedy, at law or equity, is the return of the deposit without interest. (File # 19-700179)

JAMES E. CLARKE, JR., CLERK
 CHRISTINE M. DREXEL, BRIAN THOMAS, SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES



Feb 17,24,Mar 3, 2025 0012483530

Spotsylvania County **Spotsylvania County**
TRUSTEE SALE
2225 Rock Creek Rd
Fredricksburg VA 22407
Spotsylvania County

In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$1,753,000.00, dated September 17, 2021 recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the Spotsylvania County, Virginia, in Document No. 210028819, at the request of the holder of the Note, the undersigned Substitute trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the entrance to the Spotsylvania County Judicial Center, 9107 Judicial Center Lane, Spotsylvania, on April 1, 2025 at 9:00 AM the property described in said deed, located at the above address and briefly described as: Lot 211, Section 7, Mill Garden Townhouses, with any improvements thereon.

Subject to any and all covenants, conditions, restrictions, easements, and all other matters of record taking priority over the Deed of Trust, if any, affecting the aforesaid property.

TERMS OF SALE: CASH: A deposit of \$20,000.00 or 10% of the sales price, whichever is lower, cash or certified check will be required at the time of sale, but no more than \$9,000.00 of cash will be accepted, with settlement within fifteen (15) days from the date of sale. Sale is subject to post sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale which affects the validity of the sale, as well as to post-sale confirmation of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, the sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy in law or equity shall be the return of his deposit without interest. Additional terms may be announced at the time of sale. Pursuant to the Federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, we advise you that this firm is a debt collector attempting to collect the indebtedness referred to herein and any information we obtain will be used for that purpose.

SAMUEL I. WHITE, PC., Substitute Trustee

This is a communication from a debt collector.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
 SAMUEL I. WHITE, PC. (90885)
 448 Viking Drive Suite 350
 Virginia Beach, VA 23452
 757-457-1460 - Call Between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
 or visit our website at www.siwpc.net

Mar 3,4,5,6,7, 2025 0012486191

Prince Georges County **Prince Georges County**
ORLANDS PC
 1602 VILLAGE MARKET BLVD. SE, SUITE 310
 LEESBURG, VA 20175
 703-777-7101

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEES' SALE OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY
5612 KAVEH COURT
UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20772

Under a power of sale contained in a Deed of Trust from GAILUNITTE HOWARD, dated November 26, 2012 and recorded in Liber 34221, folio 372 among the Land Records of PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD, default having occurred thereunder (Foreclosure Case docketed as Case No.CAE19-08634; Tax ID No.15-3711041) the Sub. Trustees will sell at public auction at the PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COURTHOUSE, located at FRONT OF THE DUVAL WING OF THE COURTHOUSE COMPLEX 14735 MAIN ST, UPPER MARLBORO, MD 20772, on

MARCH 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM

ALL THAT FEE SIMPLE LOT OF GROUND and improvements thereon situated in PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD and more fully described in above referenced Deed of Trust.

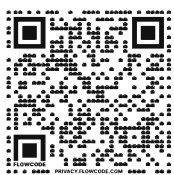
THE PROPERTY IS SUBJECT TO AN IRS RIGHT OF REDEMPTION.

The property 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 \$40,000.00 will be required at the time of sale, such deposit to be in CERTIFIED CHECK OR BY CASHIER'S CHECK. CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash within ten (10) days of final ratification of sale by the Circuit Court for PRINCE GEORGE



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