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ERIN HOOLEY/AP

Troops, including from the Texas National Guard, arrive at the U.S. Army Reserve Center in Elwood, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, on Tuesday.

Guard arrives in Illinois

Roughly 200 troops from Texas to spend up to two months on deployment

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas National Guard troops have arrived in Illinois, where they will spend up to two months protecting federal functions, personnel and property despite opposition from state and local officials.

Texas sent roughly 200 members of its National Guard, who are working on federal orders under presidential authorization, according to a Pentagon official. Approximately 300 soldiers from various units of the Illinois National Guard also have been activated, according to a statement from U.S. Northern Command.

Troops are staging at an Army Reserve center south of Chicago ahead of expected deployment into the city, where federal law enforcement have been conducting enhanced immigration-related raids, according to the Associated Press.

Their arrival follows weeks of President Donald Trump threatening such action over what he has described as crime and lawlessness in Chicago in response to the immigration raids. He also said last week before a meeting of the military's top officers that they should use "dangerous cities" such as Chicago as "training grounds for our military."

Trump approved the deployment of troops Saturday while also attempting to send hundreds more to Portland, Ore., which has also seen immigration-related protests. However, a federal judge blocked that effort. Illinois and Chicago have also sued to

SEE ILLINOIS ON PAGE 7

Task force to seek fixes for issues with base housing

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A new Pentagon barracks task force unveiled this week is charged with tackling the military's persistent base housing woes, with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth demanding a strategy within 30 days.

Speaking to an audience of new recruits Tuesday at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia, Hegseth said the task force also will ensure that unit commanders are empowered to act on quality-of-life issues facing troops.

"It is simply unacceptable that in some cases, our warriors continue to live in substandard housing," Hegseth said, adding that every service member "deserves housing that is clean, comfortable and safe."

Hegseth cited a 2023 Government Accountability Office report that detailed the squalid living conditions of some troops as one of the factors behind the formation of the task force.

The GAO investigation detailed an array of problems — such as raw sewage overflows, mold and rodent infestations — that under-

SEE FIXES ON PAGE 6



SCOTT STURKOL/U.S. Army

A new $28.08 million barracks building is under construction at Fort McCoy, Wis.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Tesla offers cheaper versions of 2 electric vehicles

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tesla rolled out new, cheaper versions of two of its electric car models on Tuesday in hopes the offerings will help revive flagging sales but investors dumped its stock anyway.

The new Model Y, costing just under $40,000 with a stripped-down interior, comes in a brutal year for Tesla as it tries to attract more customers despite an aging lineup, stiff competition from foreign EV makers and anti-Elon Musk boycotts.

The reaction from the stock market after the news broke suggests the new models are not expected to help much.

"Investors were looking for something truly different, not an iteration of a old product," said Edmunds analyst Ivan Drury, speaking as Tesla stock dropped sharply in the last minutes of trading.

Tesla also announced a cheaper version of its Model 3 for under $37,000. For New York residents taking advantage of a state rebate, the price was below $35,000.

Tesla has talked about a cheaper car to appeal to more cost-conscious consumers for years, though the two new "standard" models are priced well above the $25,000 price tag promised.

Compared to previous models, the new Model Y comes with a shorter 321-mile driving range, fewer audio speakers and a fabric interior, not microsuede. The model also lacks a panoramic glass roof and a touchscreen in the second row.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Oct. 9)	0.84
British pound (Oct. 9)	$1.31
Japanese yen (Oct. 9)	143.00
South Korean won (Oct. 9)	1365.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3744
Britain (Pound)	1.3425
Canada (Dollar)	1.3947
China (Yuan)	7.119
Denmark (Krone)	6.4179
Egypt (Pound)	47.4905
Euro	0.8595
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7819
Hungary (Forint)	336.623
Israel (Shekel)	3.2838
Japan (Yen)	152.591
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3061
Norway (Krone)	9.9727
Philippines (Peso)	57.99
Poland (Zloty)	3.6589
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7468
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2949
South Korea (Won)	1422.46
Switzerland (Franc)	0.801
Thailand (Baht)	32.469
Turkey (NewLira)	41.7127

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	7.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.25
Federal funds market rate	4.12
3-month bill	3.94
30-year bond	4.73

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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EUROPE

Military spending has lower support in Italy

By Jennifer H. Svan
Stars and Stripes

Europeans are less inclined to support defense spending increases than they were a year and a half ago, according to a new survey taken shortly after NATO's historic shootdown of a Russian drone swarm in Poland.

But with 67% of respondents backing bigger defense budgets, the poll shows that residents on the Continent are still largely on board with the repeated calls for alliance members to spend more on their militaries.

In addition, the downtick from the 74% support recorded by research firm Polling Europe in April 2024 was driven largely by Italy, whose defense budget has consistently ranked among the lowest of Europe's major powers.

The results of the new survey were shared in a report this week by Euractiv, a Brussels-based media network that specializes in European Union affairs.

The research firm Polling Europe collected 5,400 survey responses from Sept. 17-19, days after Poland said about 20 Russian drones had entered its airspace.

NATO scrambled fighter jets, resulting in the first-ever shootdown by the bloc of an aerial threat over allied territory.

The response to the question "should EU member states invest more" in defense showed a stark line between southern Europe and the rest of the Continent, according to Euractiv.

In the former, 59% of respondents said they support higher defense budgets, compared with 76% in central and Eastern Europe, and 73% in the north. Poland had the highest level of support at 86%.

In Italy, only 48% of respondents said they supported an increase in defense spending, Euractiv said, citing the results.

That figure is markedly low even for southern Europe. In Spain, for example, the level of support for raising military spending was a full 20 percentage points higher, at 68%.

In 2024, both countries ranked near the bottom in defense spending among NATO countries: Italy at 1.50% and Spain in last at 1.24%, according to NATO. Poland was at the top at 4.07%.

The Italian government faces a difficult tradeoff between military and welfare spending, Carlo Bastasin, a nonresident foreign policy senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, wrote last month.

"Not only is the former unpopular, but the latter may be important to keep the country together, consolidate a consensus of public support for the government and ensure political stability during turbulent international crises," Bastasin said.

The survey was conducted on behalf of Euractiv to gauge support for defense spending amid the Russia-Ukraine war and the June elevation of NATO's threshold for such expenditures from 2% of gross domestic product to 5%.

All 32 of the alliance's member countries were on track for the 2% mark in 2025, according to NATO.



ROYAL AIR FORCE

A British MQ-9B Protector drone taxis on a runway at RAF Marham, England, May 8.

UK's Reaper drones retire, giving way to new NATO-focused fleet

By Phillip Walter Wellman
Stars and Stripes

The U.K. has flown its MQ-9A Reaper drones for the last time, closing out an era of Middle East operations as it prepares to field new U.S.-built unmanned aircraft designed for Europe's modern threats.

The Reapers are being replaced by the MQ-9B Protector, a move that NATO and defense officials say will strengthen the alliance's surveillance network at a time when rapid coordination is seen as vital to deterring Russia and other emerging threats.

The MQ-9B's ability to operate in both civilian and military airspace allows allied drones to fly from home bases into European skies without special clearances. The U.K. is investing in 16 of the aircraft.

The Reaper was designed for uncontested airspace, which made it ideal for counterterrorism operations in the Middle East. But it was confined to overseas combat zones because it lacked certification to fly in most European airspace.

With the Protectors, the British air force will be able to conduct routine patrols from home soil and also deploy overseas for NATO and coalition missions, according to information on the British defense ministry and British air force websites.

The ability of large drones to operate in NATO airspace is seen as strategically important, both for deterrence operations tied to the Russia-Ukraine war and for integration of drones into joint missions with U.S. and allied forces across Europe.

The Protectors will carry U.K.-made precision weapons such as Brimstone 3 missiles and Paveway IV bombs, the defense ministry's website says.

The MQ-9B has a maximum payload capacity of 4,800 pounds and can stay in flight for more than 40 hours, according to California-based General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, which produces both the Reaper and the Protector.

It is also expected to remain compatible with U.S. munitions used by the Reaper fleet, according to the manufacturer's website.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Air Force is gradually retiring its older MQ-9A Reapers and expects to keep about 140 of the aircraft in service through the mid-2030s as it transitions to a next-generation unmanned platform, according to service budget documents and Air Force officials.

Belgium is following close behind the U.K. in adopting the MQ-9B, with its first SkyGuardian, a variant similar to the Protector, completing a maiden flight over Belgium last month. The aircraft is part of a four-drone order now entering testing and acceptance at Florennes Air Base, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems said Sept. 23.

The two countries are working together through a NATO support partnership to share logistics and maintenance, while Poland has also announced plans to buy the same system, according to statements from the company and the alliance.

EU chief says Europe must respond to Russian incursions

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Russia is waging a "targeted gray zone campaign" against Europe, including airspace violations, sabotage and cyberattacks that will only escalate if the Kremlin is not challenged, the European Union's top official warned on Wednesday.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that in just two weeks, fighter jets breached Estonia's airspace, while drones overflew military bases and critical infrastructure sites in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Romania.



von der Leyen

"Europe must respond. We must investigate every incident, and we must not shy away from attributing responsibility because every square centimeter of our territory must be protected and safe," von der Leyen told EU lawmakers in Strasbourg, France.

"If we hesitate to act, the gray zone will only expand," she said.

The EU's executive branch, under von der Leyen's guidance, is preparing a plan for Europe to be ready to confront such challenges by 2030. EU officials believe that Russia could be capable of launching an attack on another European country within three to five years.

The plan includes the development of a "drone wall" of high-tech systems linked to equipment that can detect, track and destroy drones, as well as strike their operating systems or pilots on the ground.

In two weeks, von der Leyen will submit a "road map" for bolstering Europe's defenses by the end of the decade to the 27-nation bloc's heads of state and governments for their approval.

Von der Leyen said that it's simply not affordable for European countries to continue to scramble the latest-generation fighter jets to counter relatively cheap drones, as happened when several of them entered Polish airspace a month ago.

"This is absolutely not sustainable. We need an anti-drone system that is affordable and fit for purpose. For swift detection, swift interception, and when needed, swift neutralization," she said, adding that Europe has much to learn in this from Ukraine.

The commission believes that the best way to encourage European countries to invest more in defense is to ensure it creates jobs and is good for business in Europe. It insists that at least 65% of any project funded with EU money should be based on the continent.

In recent years, the member nations have placed about two-thirds of their orders with U.S. defense companies.

"Most investment goes outside Europe. In other words these are jobs outside Europe. This is absolutely not sustainable," von der Leyen said. "This is European money and we want to see a return on this investment in jobs here."

At a summit in Copenhagen last week, the position of some EU leaders toward the drone incidents, acts of sabotage, cyberattacks and sanction-busting appeared to have hardened.

French President Emmanuel Macron said that Europe must take a more aggressive approach with Russia by shooting down drones that enter European airspace and boarding shadow fleet ships illicitly transporting oil to deprive Moscow of war revenue.

MILITARY

US eyes digs for 500-plus troops at Norway airfield

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military is moving ahead on development of a Norwegian airfield into a place where American and allied forces can be deployed in a crisis.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe District said in a contract notice published Monday that it is seeking proposals to prepare a "beddown" site for 576 military personnel at Rygge Air Station in southern Norway.

The project, which will cost between $5 million and $10 million, calls for various site improvements related to "base expeditionary airfield resources" to support troops, the notice stated.

The bed-down site is designed to "facilitate the rapid deployment of hundreds of airmen, including shelters, dining facility and other infrastructure should they need to quickly be stationed at Rygge Air Station," according to a separate 2024 Army statement on the plans.

The initiative is connected to a larger $200 million upgrade at the air station, which is used by American troops in Norway.

That project and others are designed to support rapid troop deployments and larger air force formations in the High North, a region where countering Russia has become a top priority for NATO and U.S. European Command.

The funding is tied to U.S. European Command's European Deterrence Initiative, which is focused on improving military infrastructure that allied troops could need in a crisis.



MICHAEL WASHBURN/U.S. Air Force

An American airman refuels a Norwegian air force F-16 Fighting Falcon during an exercise in 2020, at Rygge Air Station in Norway.

The Arctic has taken on added importance in recent years for the Pentagon, given concerns about Russia's growing military presence there.

China also has signaled an intent to play a larger role in the region, declaring itself in 2018 a "near-Arctic country" with vested interests.

Other projects at Rygge include security improvements, expanded munitions storage and a quick reaction alert facility to store fighter jets.

Besides military concerns, there is expected to be more economic competition in the High North, where melting sea ice has raised the prospect of new shipping lanes in the years to come as well as jockeying for access to the wealth of natural resources there.



SETH ROBSON//Stars and Stripes

Members of Marines Rotational Force-Darwin arrive at Cloncurry Airport during Talisman Sabre training in Queensland, Australia, in July.

Marines head home after 6 months of drills and missions in Australia

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

After a six-month deployment filled with military exercises and disaster relief missions across Australia and the Philippines, the Marine Rotational Force-Darwin is headed home, the Australian Defence Department announced Wednesday.

A spokesman for the 2,500-Marine rotational force did not respond to an interview request Tuesday by Signal. The unit commander, Marine Col. Jason Armas, said in the Australian statement that this year's mission showed the strength of Marines and Australian troops working side by side.

Marines have deployed to Australia's northern coast on six-month rotations every year since 2012.

"What began fourteen years ago as training in Australia has grown into integrated operations across the region and a force capable of responding to crisis and contingency," Armas said.

This year's rotational force took part in the large-scale Talisman Sabre drill across Australia and Papua New Guinea during July and August. The three-week biennial exercise involved more than 40,000 troops from the United States, Australia and 17 other nations.

The Marines also joined multiple exercises in the Philippines.

In July, they helped deliver food and other supplies to northern Philippine communities affected by typhoons, tropical storms and monsoon rain.

Australian air force Group Capt. Melissa Neilson, head of Headquarters Northern Command, said the Northern Territory welcomed the Marines.

"Marine Rotational Force-Darwin is an example of how Australia and the US are committed to ensuring a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific," she said in the statement.

The Marines are moving beyond integrating with the Australians and have shown their ability to rapidly project forces forward, Armas said.

The rotational force "continues to grow in scale and complexity," he said. "This year we've trained not only in Australia but alongside our partners in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea."

The Marines will return to the Northern Territory in early 2026, according to the Australian statement.

Al-Qaida-affiliated attack planner killed in US strike

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

U.S. forces last week conducted a strike in Syria that killed a senior al-Qaida-affiliated attack planner, U.S. Central Command said Tuesday.

The strike last Thursday resulted in the death of Muhammad 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Ahmad, who was a member of Ansar al-Islam, an al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist group.

"U.S. forces in the Middle East remain postured to disrupt and defeat efforts by terrorists to plan, organize and conduct attacks," Adm. Brad Cooper, CENTCOM commander, said in a statement. "We will continue to defend our homeland, warfighters, allies and partners throughout the region and beyond."

No other information was provided on the strike.

The Pentagon has lowered the number of service members in Syria from about 2,500 to fewer than 1,000 in recent months, with plans to eventually consolidate troop presence from eight bases to one.

U.S. forces are also working alongside international partners in Syria and Iraq to eliminate ISIS as part of Operation Inherent Resolve.

US sailor in Japan accused of injuring man

BY HANA KUSUMOTO AND ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Japanese prosecutors on Tuesday indicted a U.S. Navy sailor accused of injuring an 87-year-old man in a car collision in February.

Master Chief Petty Officer Charlie Sison Julio, 45, was charged with negligent driving resulting in injuries, a spokesman for the Yokohama District Public Prosecutor's Office in Yokosuka told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday.

Prosecutors said Julio, who is assigned to Yokosuka's Naval Education Training Command, was driving in Yokosuka on Feb. 11 when he made a right turn and struck an 87-year-old man in a crosswalk.

The spokesman said Julio is "suspected of neglecting his obligation as a driver to stop and confirm if any pedestrians were in the crosswalk" before making a right turn.

The incident took place on a city road in the Fukadadai neighborhood, about a half-mile from the base's front gate, according to a news release from Masahiko Goto, an attorney representing the injured man.

The man was seriously injured, including a head injury with bleeding around the brain and fractures to his hip and left kneecap, Goto said.

The Yokosuka Police Department referred Julio's case to the prosecutor's office on Sept. 12. A trial date has not been scheduled but is expected soon, according to the news release.

Prosecutors, not police, decide formal charges under Japan's criminal justice system.

The victim has no memory of the accident — possibly due to his head injury — and is receiving rehabilitation treatment at the hospital, Goto said. The man's wife said their lives have changed significantly since the incident.

"My husband was healthy until the accident, and the accident took away freedom of his daily life," she said in the news release.

Naval Forces Japan referred all questions to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, which did not immediately respond to an email after hours on Tuesday.

MILITARY

VFW to offer cannabis drinks at local posts

By Linda F. Hersey
Stars and Stripes

Veterans of Foreign Wars — the national advocacy group for former service members — has signed a deal with a national beverage maker to offer cannabis-infused drinks at VFW chapters in states and jurisdictions where recreational marijuana use is legal.

Sales of Torch cannabis seltzer drinks at hundreds of VFW posts nationwide are part of a new marketing partnership announced Tuesday by the veterans organization. The initiative will place VFW branding on select Torch hemp-derived beverages, with proceeds supporting veterans initiatives, according to the VFW.

"Under the licensing agreement, select VFW-branded Torch beverage products will be made available, and proceeds will directly support VFW initiatives such as the National Veterans Service program, which provides no-cost assistance to veterans navigating the VA claims process, and veterans and military support programs, which deliver financial assistance to military families," the VFW said in a written statement.

This marks the first time a major veterans service organization has collaborated in such a way with a cannabis company. VFW has 1.4 million members.

"This new relationship between Torch Drinks LLC and the VFW brings a federally compliant and responsibly formulated alternative to one of the most respected veteran service organizations in the United States," the VFW and the beverage company said in a joint statement.

Torch beverages contain Delta-9 THC, the primary psychoactive compound found in cannabis plants, according to the company. The compound creates the "high" effect associated with cannabis use.

VFW chapters and posts will begin offering the low-dose version of the flavored seltzer drinks later this year.

"Oh, wow. That's amazing. Cannabis has saved my life," said Army veteran Matthew Gibson, who served from 1998-2008, with deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. The former sergeant said cannabis has helped ease his chronic migraines and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as anxiety and insomnia.

The canned drinks will be offered at local VFW posts and other meeting facilities in states and jurisdictions where cannabis use is legal.

"Torch Drinks is proud to work with the VFW to provide veterans with a safe, federally compliant, social alternative that is like none other," said Collin Kerrigan, co-founder of Torch Beverage Co.

Gibson, 45, said he is not a VFW member but might consider joining.

"Working with Torch helps us raise funds for those vital programs while also allowing us to explore better ways to meet the needs of an evolving veterans community," VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore said.

"While the VFW is not a pro-cannabis organization, we understand the need for adult consumption alternatives to better meet the needs of an evolving veterans' community," Whitmore said.

Forty states, three territories and the District of Columbia have legalized cannabis for medical use.

Twenty-four states, two territories and the District of Columbia have legalized small amounts of cannabis for adult recreational use, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

But at the federal level, marijuana and marijuana products continue to be illegal.



TORCH BEVERAGE CO.

Veterans of Foreign Wars announced a new partnership with Torch Beverage Co. to place VFW branding on some of the Florida company's cannabis-infused beverage products with proceeds supporting initiatives for veterans, according to the VFW.

Veterans organizations have urged the VA to conduct more research into cannabis as an alternative to narcotics to treat chronic pain, PTSD and the effects of traumatic brain injury.

The Food and Drug Administration has recognized increased interest in the use of cannabis to relieve the symptoms of a variety of medical conditions, including cancer. Of the states that allow medical marijuana, chronic pain, traumatic brain injury and PTSD are often qualifying medical ailments.

Marijuana advocates have stated legal access to medical cannabis could decrease opioid use among veterans prescribed the narcotic for chronic pain, according to Disabled American Veterans.

Gibson said he would like to see veterans posts begin to offer designated areas where members can smoke cannabis.

"Cannabis is a safer option to alcohol," said Gibson, who is prescribed medical marijuana.

Coast Guard cutter returns to Hawaii after $156M drug bust

By Wyatt Olson
Stars and Stripes

The Coast Guard cutter Midgett has returned to Hawaii after completing a 79-day patrol that included seizure of cocaine street-valued at $156 million.

The cutter's deployment to the Eastern Pacific supported the counterdrug mission Operation Pacific Viper, the Coast Guard said in a news release Tuesday.

"While patrolling international waters off the Pacific coasts of Mexico and Central America, Midgett's crew apprehended 19 suspected drug smugglers and interdicted four suspected drug smuggling vessels, preventing 21,126 pounds of cocaine, with an estimated value of more than $156.4 million, from reaching U.S. shores," the release states. The drugs were offloaded in San Diego late last month.

Operation Pacific Viper is a partnership between the Coast Guard and Navy focused on countering drug trafficking and human smuggling in the Eastern Pacific.

The Midgett, which returned to Honolulu on Friday, is one of a pair of Legend-class national security cutters based in Hawaii.



RICHARD URANGA/U.S. Navy

Crew of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Midgett offload bales of seized narcotics in San Diego, on Sept. 25.

The cutters are 418 feet long, with a top speed of more than 28 knots, or about 32 mph. They have a range of 13,800 miles and hold a crew of up to 150. They can stay at sea for three months.

They are armed with a 57-millimeter gun that fires more than 200 rounds a minute and can be used against a high-speed, maneuvering surface vessel. Other arms include a 20 mm gun and four .50-caliber machine guns.

During the recent deployment, the Midgett's crew worked with other Coast Guard units, including Tactical Law Enforcement Team South and the Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, or HITRON.

HITRON intercepted its 1,000th suspected drug-trafficking vessel in August while deployed on the Midgett, the Coast Guard said in a Sept. 10 news release.

A helicopter crew with the squadron spied the vessel about 272 nautical miles southwest of Acapulco, Mexico, in the early evening of Aug. 25.

"The helicopter directed the vessel to heave to over the radio and with warning shots," the news release states. "When the vessel failed to comply, the crew used precision rifle fire from the helicopter to disable the vessel's engine, in accordance with airborne use of force policy."

A boarding team from the Midgett seized about 3,000 pounds of cocaine found aboard and dumped around the vessel.

In August, the cutter Hamilton offloaded more than 76,000 pounds of seized cocaine and marijuana at Port Everglades, Fla., the largest such offload in Coast Guard history.

MILITARY

US assists with saving sailor's mom from Gaza



COURTESY OF YOUNIS FIRWANA/The Washington Post

Younis Firwana with his family at his graduation from Navy boot camp in Great Lakes, Ill. From left, Younis's wife, Amanda Hancock, and daughters, Anya, Anna and Aya.

BY HOPE HODGE SECK AND ADAM TAYLOR
The Washington Post

A Palestinian woman whose son serves in the U.S. Navy was secretly evacuated from war-torn Gaza in recent weeks after an intervention by the Trump administration and the Israeli and Jordanian governments, according to people familiar with the matter and correspondence reviewed by The Washington Post.

The operation, entailing a coordinated pause in Israeli military strikes to safeguard the woman's movements, illustrates the extreme difficulty of orchestrating a legal exit from the Gaza Strip without resources and influence. The unusual operation occurred as the Trump administration has, at turns, been accused of turning a blind eye to the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza — even, in some cases, when they are U.S. citizens.

For Ahlam Firwana, 59, the escape to safety required a $10,000 donation to cover transportation costs, sophisticated software to monitor her movements amid the Israeli military's ongoing assault, and the direct involvement of senior U.S. officials who helped secure agreements from the governments of Jordan and Israel to facilitate the woman's departure from Gaza.

Firwana's son, Navy Petty Officer Younis Firwana, 32, joined the military in 2023 seeking a path to U.S. citizenship. After the Gaza war began that October, his mother and six siblings faced ever-increasing danger and privation, he recalled in an interview. In 2024, the family's seven-story home was leveled in the bombardment. Food and medicine grew scarce.

"They had a point," he said, "where they were eating birdseed."

The evacuation of U.S. citizens from Gaza has been a contentious issue since the war began after Hamas militants staged a deadly, coordinated attack in Israel. Palestinian Americans and their families have complained since then that the United States was not doing enough to ensure the safe exit of U.S. citizens from Gaza, with some suing the Biden administration in December.

Maria Kari, a lawyer who represents some of those families but was not involved in the evacuation of Ahlam Firwana, said the situation has become more dire under President Donald Trump. In August, the State Department announced that it would halt visitor visas for people from Gaza. The decision was made days after far-right activist Laura Loomer reacted to video of Palestinian children and their caregivers arriving at an airport in San Francisco by labeling the program a "national security threat." Loomer holds outsize influence with the president, though she has no official role in the administration.

The children and spouses of U.S. citizens have seen their requests for evacuations denied based on national security grounds, according to accounts from lawyers and human rights groups.

Younis Firwana became a naturalized U.S. citizen in February 2024 on the day he graduated from Navy boot camp. He was told, he said, to stand beneath a Jordanian flag during the ceremony as the U.S. did not recognize the flag of Palestine.

From California, where he is stationed as a Navy medic, Younis Firwana had been working since early 2024 to coordinate his mother's departure through Jordan. He'd applied for expedited processing for his siblings' cases, too, but received denials in every case but his mother's, he said. He secured approval from U.S. immigration officials for her to enter the U.S., but couldn't find anyone who could escort her out of Gaza or help her renew her expired passport. U.S. officials, he said, told him their hands were tied.

In early September, Younis Firwana was connected with Special Operations Association of America, a veterans organization that has supported the legal evacuation of roughly 1,100 people from Gaza since the war began, including the mother of a U.S. soldier.

Alex Plitsas, a member of the veterans group and a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, assembled a team to help the Firwana family. Among them was Steve Gabavics, a retired Army colonel who served in Jerusalem from 2001 to 2004 as chief of staff for the U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Plitsas also enlisted the help of Morgan Ortagus, Trump's deputy special envoy to the Middle East and herself a Navy reservist, who connected the team with top officials at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan. Another member of the group notified the National Security Council of planning, according to messages reviewed by The Post.

Spokespeople for the White House and the State Department did not respond to requests for comment.

A U.S. official, who like some others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the evacuation of Ahlam Firwana, attributed this successful evacuation to U.S. diplomats in Amman. "The team at Embassy Jordan went above and beyond to help the mother of an American service member to get safely out of Gaza," this person said. "This is an example of the heroic work our Foreign Service officers perform around the world every day."

The journey took 19 hours in all. On Sept. 17, Plitsas sent a small group of collaborators a celebratory two-word message: "SHE'S OUT!"

Kari, the lawyer representing Palestinian American families, welcomed the news of Firwana's release but said the case raised questions about others who remain stranded, including her client Salsabeel Elhelou, a U.S. citizen who is seeking the evacuation of her three noncitizen children.

Emails shared with The Post show the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem has cited "U.S. national security" and concerns about visas as reasons for not helping to evacuate Elhelou's children.

The U.S. government had shown deference to military families while making it "very clear that on a wholesale level, they don't care about Palestinian lives, even when they are American Palestinian lives," said Kari.

For now, Ahlam Firwana remains in Jordan, awaiting visa approval. Her son said he is eager to help the rest of his family leave Gaza, but must await a slow-moving and opaque visa application process.

Learning that his mother's case had attracted the attention of top U.S. government officials has had a profound effect on the Firwanas, her son said. "That means a lot, that these guys care about my family," he said. "I'm not alone."

He wonders, though, why his mother's departure required such extraordinary intervention, when the United States had, in previous years, established policy to support humanitarian resettlements from war zones, including Ukraine and Afghanistan.

"The U.S.," he added, "should be doing more than this."

Fixes: Approved spending bill to provide over $1B for barrack improvements

FROM PAGE 1

mine quality of life and overall troop combat readiness.

Barracks problems vary from base to base. In some cases, the issues go back years and stem from underinvestment spanning decades.

In Europe, many U.S. soldiers have long been dissatisfied with living conditions on garrison installations. A 2025 Army tenant satisfaction survey found that soldiers and their families in Europe were the least satisfied when it comes to government housing.

Some top concerns included overcrowding and outdated facilities that resulted in "depressing" living conditions.

In some cases, garrison housing areas in Europe date back roughly 70 years and lack modern amenities, Army officials have said.

More money has flowed into Europe in recent years to address such problems, and major projects are now underway.

In the Italian city of Vicenza, home to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, an ongoing $500 million housing project is slated to create more than 470 homes by 2028. The first 111 of the units at Caserma Ederle and Villaggio were scheduled to be completed later this year.

And in Baumholder, Germany, there are numerous plans for upgraded family housing and new soldier barracks.

It can take years, however, for new barracks and family housing to go from planning to completion.

A sprawling spending bill passed this summer by Congress will deliver an initial jolt to improving barracks, with more than $1 billion being directed toward troop housing, Hegseth said.

His office also will review and approve the forthcoming task force's plan "in crucial ways, big and small."

"Barracks are where warriors go to rest and recover, the place they go to mentally and physically prepare for winning the next fight," Hegseth said.

MILITARY

Guard deployment lawsuit exposes partisan divide

By Gary Fields
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A partisan battle is playing out in a Washington courtroom that could decide the fate of President Donald Trump's federal law enforcement intervention in the nation's capital.

Dozens of states have taken sides in a lawsuit challenging the open-ended National Guard deployment in Washington, with their support falling along party lines. It shows how the law enforcement operation in the nation's capital remains a flashpoint in the Republican president's broadening campaign to send the military to cities across the country and underscores the deepening divisions over the move.

The lawsuit, filed Sept. 4 by Washington Attorney General Brian Schwalb, challenges the Trump administration's use of the National Guard in the heavily Democratic city as part of an emergency order issued by Trump to stem what the president called "out of control" crime.

Although the order has lapsed, hundreds of troops are still in the city, which is seeking a preliminary injunction to stop the deployment.

With legal action launched against deployments to Portland, Ore., and Chicago, the case will be closely watched, even though Washington's status as a federal district makes it an outlier. Oral arguments are set to begin Oct. 24.

Twenty-three states have aligned with the Trump administration's stance that the president has the authority to bring in the National Guard, while 22 states back Washington's position. The 23 states supporting the administration have Republican attorneys general while the other 22 have Democrats.



Craig Hudson/For the Washington Post

Members of the West Virginia National Guard at the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 30.

For the states joining in the lawsuit — especially those facing their own interventions — supporting Washington was a way to show solidarity against what they said was presidential overreach.

"It is un-American to use the military in any of our cities — absent truly extraordinary circumstances — and a threat against one city is a threat to us all," said Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield, a Democrat, who supports Washington.

The states supporting Washington said in their filing that the deployment of National Guard units without the city's consent is unlawful, unconstitutional and undemocratic.

It "sets a chilling precedent that threatens the constitutional rights of Americans everywhere," they said. "By unlawfully deploying National Guard troops, and by threatening to deploy the Guard to every State at his whim, the President has attacked State sovereignty, harmed local jurisdictions and made us less safe."

Those siding with the administration have said Trump is in the right with his National Guard deployment in the District of Columbia.

"The District belongs to 'the People' as a whole, and its safety is critical to our constitutional republic," the 23 states said in a Sept. 16 filing, adding that they "have a profound interest in this case to ensure that President Trump can continue to protect our Nation's capital."

The reasoning, they say, is for safety not just for residents but for members of Congress and their staffers, as well as administration officials and foreign embassy workers. The filing notes all the groups have been crime victims in Washington in recent years. The states also argue that the Constitution and Congress give presidents enormous authority to protect the district.

"It is concerning to have states so divided and polarized," said Emory University School of Law professor Mark Nevitt, who noted that it was just Republican-led states that have sent guard troops to Washington. The case filings are "a further representation of that divide."

The Washington lawsuit emerged from the presidential order in August that led to roughly 2,000 troops from the District of Columbia National Guard and eight states patrolling public areas, including train stations, subway stations, the National Mall and other high pedestrian traffic areas. Some have been armed, unnerving residents, although no incidents have been reported.

Presidents have authority to call up the Guard under a variety of circumstances, including to repel a rebellion or invasion, but the legal extent of that is debatable.

In the Washington case, states will be looking at what the court says about the president's authority to deploy the guard, the legality of deploying out-of-state guard units against the wishes of local officials and whether police powers are deemed to have been encroached upon by the federal intervention.

Those arguments could be relevant for any future court cases against the deployments.

States on the winning side of the Washington case will likely feel vindicated and may seek to point to it as precedent. But the district's unique status means the legal arguments may be different for states.

The president has authorities in Washington that he does not have elsewhere. In states, governors control their own National Guards.

In Washington, a federal district, the president is already in charge of the National Guard and arguably can legally deploy troops without congressional approval. To deploy the National Guard to a state usually requires the approval of that state's governor, along with legal reasoning for doing so.

Illinois: Trump, Texas governor provide few details on deployment

FROM PAGE 1

stop the deployment.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott shared a photo Monday evening of Texas troops boarding a plane while carrying large plastic riot shields. Abbott said he authorized a total of 400 troops for the mission.

His office did not respond Tuesday to questions about whether the troops sent to Chicago were part of Texas' state-funded mission to deter illegal activity along its border with Mexico.

If that is the case, those troops moved from a paid state mission to one where they will not receive payment until the federal government shutdown ends. The shutdown has entered it second week.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker said Sunday no officials from the federal government called to discuss plans with him before sending the Guard troops out of Texas and called on Abbott to withdraw his support.



Erin Hooley/AP

Military personnel in uniform, with the Texas National Guard patch on, are seen at the U.S. Army Reserve Center, Tuesday in Elwood, Ill., a suburb of Chicago.

"There is no reason a president should send military troops into a sovereign state without their knowledge, consent or cooperation," Pritzker said in a statement.

The Associated Press reported on Wednesday that Trump said Pritzker and Chicago's mayor, both Democrats, should be jailed as they oppose his deployment of National Guard troops.

The Department of Homeland Security launched what it called Operation Midway Blitz in Chicago about a month ago and has arrested more than 1,000 people officials said are in the United States without authorization and have criminal pasts.

However, residents have described to local news outlets a raid on an apartment building in the middle of the night where children were awakened and separated from their parents and sweeping arrests where U.S. citizens are also detained. This has led to protests in the city where federal agents used tear gas on the crowd.

The deployment to Illinois mirrors Trump's use of troops in Los Angeles in June, when he sent the California National Guard and members of the Marine Corps into the city to protect federal buildings and personnel against the wishes of state officials during immigration-related protests.

California sued and a judge ruled that the deployment was illegal.

Guard troops in California were used at times to create a perimeter around federal agents as they conducted arrests in and around Los Angeles. Roughly 100 remain on the mission, according to U.S. Northern Command.

Nationla Guard troops were also arriving in Memphis, Tenn., AP reported Wednesday.

Memphis police Chief Cerelyn Davis said a small group of commanders was already in the city, planning for the arrival of Guard troops.

Tennessee Republican Gov. Bill Lee has said troops will be deputized by the U.S. Marshals Service to "play a critical support role" for law enforcement, though that hasn't been defined yet.

Trump also sent National Guard troops into Washington, D.C., where federal jurisdiction functions differently, and troops spent time collecting trash and beautifying parkland.

NATION

Quiet talks emerging in shutdown debate

By Lisa Mascaro, Mary Clare Jalonick and Joey Cappelletti
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Tours at the Capitol have come to a standstill. The House is keeping its doors closed, while the Senate repeated its loop Wednesday of failed votes on competing bills to reopen the government. President Donald Trump is threatening to mass fire federal workers and refuse back pay for the rest.

As the government shutdown entered a second week, there's no discernible endgame in sight.

"Congress, do your damn job," said Randy Erwin, president of the National Federation of Federal Employees, with other top union leaders near the Capitol.

No negotiations, at least publicly, are underway, but behind the scenes quiet talks are emerging. Clusters of lawmakers, Republicans and Democrats, are meeting privately, searching for ways out of the impasse, which hinges on striking a deal for preserving health care subsidies. Signs of discomfort are apparent, as military troops are set to miss paychecks, flights are being delayed at airports nationwide and federal programs are disrupted.

Two prominent Republicans, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, have broken from their party, saying something must be done to help Americans pay for the coming health insurance rate hikes. At the same time, the GOP leadership's strategy of convincing nervous Democrats to immediately end the shutdown without resolving the health care issue was not working.



Allison Robbert/AP

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., following the weekly Senate luncheon on Capitol Hill on Tuesday.

The dueling bills, one from Republicans and the other from Democrats, failed again in the Senate.

The Republicans who have majority control in Congress believe they have the upper hand politically, as they fend off Democratic demands to quickly fund health insurance subsidies as part of any plan to end the shutdown.

House Speaker Mike Johnson appears so confident he is preparing to take live questions from callers on C-SPAN's Thursday morning show. On Wednesday he squared off against Democratic senators outside his office.

But so have Democrats dug in, convinced that Americans are on their side in the fight to prevent the looming health care price spikes and blaming Trump for the shutdown.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer's expletive-dotted rant was finding fans on social media.

At its core, the debate is over the health care issue that has tangled Congress for years, and in particular, the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, that Trump tried, and failed, to repeal and replace during his first term at the White House.

Congress increased the federal subsidies that help people purchase private insurance policies on the Affordable Care Act exchanges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal aid was popular, and it boosted ACA enrollment to a record 24 million people. Those enhanced subsidies are set to expire at year's end.

Republicans say Congress can deal with the health insurance issue in the months ahead. Democrats are fighting to resolve the problem now, as people are receiving notices of higher policy rates for the new year.

A loosely formed collection of senators, Republicans and Democrats, have bantered about options for addressing the health insurance problem.

One Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, has offered her own plan for kickstarting talks. It involves re-opening the government now, but with a "commitment," she said, to discussing the health care issue.

Another option floated by GOP Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota, a former state governor, is a temporary extension of the subsidies, for one year, and then a phase out — though House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries has panned the short extension as a nonstarter.

And Trump himself signaled he was open to negotiating with Democrats over their demands to save health care subsidies. Earlier this week, the president said that talks were already underway as he wants "great health care" for the people, only to shift his tone hours later to say the government must reopen first.

"I spoke to the president at length yesterday about that very thing," House Speaker Mike Johnson said about his Monday conversation with Trump. "And yes, he wants to solve problems."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, the Republican from South Dakota, has said there may be a path forward — once the government reopens.

Trump predicts trade deal will be worked out with Canada

By Rob Gillies
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump predicted that Canadians will travel to the United States once again after a trade deal is reached.

Trump told reporters in the Oval Office while meeting with Prime Minister Mark Carney on Tuesday that he understands why Canadians are refusing to visit.

Trump's talk of making Canada the 51st state to avoid tariffs has infuriated Canadians, who are canceling trips to the U.S. in big numbers. There's been a 23% drop in Canadian visits to the U.S. in the first seven months of the year compared to the same period in 2024, according to Canada's national statistical office.

"I understand that. Look, I understand that," Trump said before predicting Canada and the U.S. would ultimately reach a deal.

"It's something that will get worked out. There's still great love between the two countries but you know American people want product here, they want to make it here," Trump said. "We are competing for the same business. That's the problem. That's why I keep mentioning one way to solve that problem. There's a very easy way."

Trump has often said that Canada could avoid tariffs by becoming the 51st state. The repeated jabs about acquiring Canada have alienated Canadian travelers.

Carney made his second visit to the Oval Office ahead of next year's review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement and as one of the world's most durable and amicable alliances has been fractured by Trump's trade war and annexation threats.

Trump said he was open to extending the free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada through a renegotiation or seeking "different deals."

The free trade agreement was enacted during Trump's first term, and it allows the majority of Canadian and Mexican goods to be shipped to the U.S. without tariffs. But Trump has made it clear that he wants to reshape the relationship, and he expressed ambivalence over the process as long as he feels like he's able to improve America's position.

Carney entered the visit hoping to find some relief on sector-specific tariffs.

After the meeting, Dominic LeBlanc, the minister responsible for Canada-U.S. trade, described the talks as "successful" and "positive" on trade issues, though he noted the conversation would continue. He said Canada was looking to get a deal done quickly on steel and aluminum.



Adrian Wyld/AP

Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney and President Donald Trump hold a press conference at the White House Tuesday.

NATION

Comey pleads not guilty to lying to Congress

Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Former FBI Director James Comey pleaded not guilty Wednesday to face a criminal case that has thrown a spotlight on the Justice Department's efforts to target adversaries of President Donald Trump.

The arraignment is expected to be brief, but the moment is nonetheless loaded with significance given that the case has amplified concerns the Justice Department is being weaponized in pursuit of Trump's political enemies and is operating at the behest of a White House determined to seek retribution for perceived wrongs against the president.

Comey entered a not guilty plea through his lawyer at the federal courthouse in Alexandria, Va., to allegations that he lied to Congress five years go. The plea kickstarts a process of legal wrangling in which defense lawyers will almost certainly move to get the indictment dismissed before trial, possibly by arguing the case amounts to a selective or vindictive prosecution.

The indictment two weeks ago followed an extraordinary chain of events that saw Trump publicly implore Attorney General Pam Bondi to take action against Comey and other perceived adversaries. The Republican president also replaced the veteran attorney who had been overseeing the investigation with Lindsey Halligan, a White House aide who had never previously served as a federal prosecutor. Halligan rushed to file charges before a legal deadline lapsed despite warnings from other lawyers in the office that the evidence was insufficient for an indictment.

The two-count indictment alleges that Comey made a false statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee on Sept. 30, 2020, by denying he had authorized an associate to serve as an anonymous source to the news media and that he obstructed a congressional proceeding. Comey has denied any wrongdoing and has said he was looking forward to a trial. The indictment does not identify the associate or say what information may have been discussed with the media, making it challenging to assess the strength of the evidence or to even fully parse the allegations.

Though an indictment is typically just the start of a protracted court process, the Justice Department has trumpeted the development itself as something of a win, regardless of the outcome. Trump administration officials are likely to point to any conviction as proof the case was well-justified, but an acquittal or even dismissal may also be held up as further support for their long-running contention the criminal justice system is stacked against them.



Comey

The judge randomly assigned to the case, Michael Nachmanoff, was nominated to the bench by President Joe Biden's Democratic administration and is a former chief federal defender. Known for methodical preparation and a cool temperament, the judge and his background have already drawn Trump's attention, with the president deriding him as a "Crooked Joe Biden appointed Judge."

Besides Comey, the Justice Department is also investigating other foes of the president, including New York Attorney General Letitia James and Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff of California.

Several Comey family members arrived in court Wednesday morning ahead of the arraignment, including his daughter Maurene, who was fired by the Justice Department earlier this year from her position as a federal prosecutor in Manhattan, as well as Troy Edwards Jr., a son-in-law of Comey's who minutes after Comey was indicted resigned his job as a prosecutor in the Eastern District of Virginia — the same office that filed the charges.

The indictment was the latest chapter in a long-broken relationship between Trump and Comey.

Trump arrived in office in January 2017 as Comey, appointed to the FBI director job by President Barack Obama four years earlier, was overseeing an investigation into ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

The dynamic was fraught from the start, with Comey briefing Trump weeks before he took office on the existence of uncorroborated and sexually salacious gossip in a dossier of opposition research compiled by a former British spy.

In their first several private interactions, Comey would later reveal, Trump asked his FBI director to pledge his loyalty to him and to drop an FBI investigation into his administration's first national security adviser, Michael Flynn. Comey said Trump also asked him to announce that Trump himself was not under investigation as part of the broader inquiry into Russian election interference, something Comey did not do.

Comey was abruptly fired in May 2017 while at an event in Los Angeles, with Trump later saying he was thinking about "this Russia thing" when he decided to terminate him. The firing was investigated by Justice Department special counsel Robert Mueller as an act of potential obstruction of justice.

Bob Ross paintings to be auctioned to support public television stations

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Thirty paintings created by the bushy-haired, soft-spoken Bob Ross will soon be up for auction to defray the costs of programming for public television stations suffering from cuts in federal funding.

Ross, a public television stalwart in the 1980s and '90s, "dedicated his life to making art accessible to everyone," said Joan Kowalski, president of Bob Ross Inc. "This auction ensures his legacy continues to support the very medium that brought his joy and creativity into American homes for decades."

Bonhams in Los Angeles will auction three of Ross' paintings on Nov. 11. Other auctions will follow in London, New York, Boston and online. All profits are pledged to stations that use content from distributor American Public Television.

The idea is to help stations in need with licensing fees that allow them to show popular programs that include "The Best of Joy of Painting," based on Ross' show, "America's Test Kitchen," "Julia Child's French Chef Classics" and "This Old House." Small and rural stations are particularly challenged.

As desired by President Donald Trump, Congress has eliminated $1.1 billion allocated to public broadcasting, leaving about 330 PBS and 246 NPR stations to find alternative funding sources. Many launched emergency fund drives. Some have been forced to lay off staff and make programming cuts.



BOB ROSS INC./AP

Late artist Bob Ross was the host of the series "The Joy of Painting."

The beloved Ross died in 1995 of complications from cancer after 11 years in production with "The Joy of Painting." His how-to program was shown on stations around the U.S. and around the world. The former Air Force drill sergeant known for his calm demeanor and encouraging words enjoyed a resurgence in popularity during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ross spoke often as he worked on air about painting happy little clouds and trees, and making no mistakes, only "happy accidents."

The thirty paintings to be auctioned span Ross' career and include landscapes depicting serene mountain vistas and lake scenes, his signature aesthetic. He created most of the 30 on-air, each in under 30 minutes, which was the span of a single episode.

Bonhams sold two early 1990s mountain-and-lake scenes of Ross in August for $114,800 and $95,750. The auctions of the 30 paintings soon to be sold have an estimated total value of $850,000 to $1.4 million, Bonhams said.

Hurricane Priscilla moves along Mexico in the Pacific; Atlantic storm to strengthen

Associated Press

MIAMI — Hurricane Priscilla weakened in the Pacific as it moved Wednesday along the west coast of Mexico while Tropical Storm Jerry in the Atlantic was expected to strengthen on a track for the Leeward Islands, forecasters said.

Priscilla on Tuesday approached major hurricane status, but by Wednesday morning was a Category 1 storm with maximum sustained winds around 80 mph, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

Still, heavy rainfall and flash flooding were possible this week as the storm moves along Mexico's Pacific coast, as well as later this week and into the weekend in the Southwestern United States.

The storm was moving northwest at 8 mph. It was centered about 195 miles southwest of the southern tip of Baja Calif., forecasters said.

In the Atlantic, Tropical Storm Jerry had top winds of 50 mph. It was centered about 835 miles east-southeast of the northern Leeward Islands while moving west-northwest at 23 mph.

Forecasters said Jerry is expected to strengthen into a hurricane Thursday. The core of the storm is expected to be near or to the north of the northern Leeward Islands late Thursday and Friday.

On Thursday into early Friday, 2 to 4 inchesof rain could fall across the Leeward Islands — bringing the risk of flash flooding. A tropical storm watch was in effect for Antigua, Barbuda and Anguilla; St. Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat; St. Barts and St. Martin; and Saba and St. Eustatius.

In the Pacific, a tropical storm watch due to Hurricane Priscilla was in effect for Baja California Sur, from Cabo San Lucas to Cabo San Lazaro. Priscilla was forecast to continue to weaken on Wednesday, the hurricane center said. A major hurricane is defined as Category 3 or higher and wind speeds of at least 111 mph.

Large waves generated by Priscilla were affecting portions of the coast of southwestern and west-central Mexico, as well as portions of the coast of the southern Baja California peninsula, forecasters said.

Farther out in the Pacific, Tropical Storm Octave was weakening about 720 milessouthwest of the southern tip of Baja Cal. Its maximum sustained winds were 40 mph and it was moving east at 12 mph.

Octave was expected to dissipate by Thursday night, forecasters said, and it wasn't threatening land.

NATION

‘Fear is an art’

Performers at Mich. haunted house learn tricks of the terrifying trade

By Mike Householder
Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. — Grotesque makeup, menacing props and intimidating costumes are just one part of a Michigan haunted house’s 25-year-old formula to terrify guests.

It starts by educating the actors looking to provide the most horrifying experience to its visitors. At Scare School, they learn all the tricks of the trade.

Lessons begin weeks before the four-level walk-through scream factory opens to visitors, introducing fresh talent to the get-ups, face paint and unnatural body movements proven to petrify thousands of customers since the turn of the century.

The actors’ report card of sorts is the “Wimp Out Score Board” in Erebus Haunted Attraction’s ground-level lobby, tallying the numbers of visitors who flee before making it through all four levels or who join the “wetters, pukers & fainters” total.

And, yes, they really tally it.

The one-time abandoned parking structure in Pontiac consistently lands on lists of the scariest haunted houses in America. Operations managers and brothers Zac and Brad Terebus said the coaching and training performers receive isn’t just about what they wear or how loud they can shout.

“Scare School really comes down to the psychology of fear,” Zac Terebus said. “Fear is not an accident. Fear is an art.”

In the weeks before Erebus opened for the Sept. 19-Nov. 2 Halloween season, managers auditioned and hired dozens of scare actors, then coached them to be as frightening as humanly — or rather, supernaturally — possible.

In an upstairs room in early September, Erebus veterans schooled the newbies on the finer points of zombie shuffling and demon shrieking, walking on stilts and wielding a spiked (plastic) club. The new hires also learned about make-up application, costuming, how to get into their roles and personas as well as rules about interacting with the guests.

It’s all part of an effort to bring out their inner fiend, Brad Terebus said.

“Let’s say they’re a lawyer by day,” he said. “They can come here, break their shell off and just release this monster within them.”

Alan Tucker, who portrays a bloodthirsty clown, said scare acting is “therapeutic.”

“You never really think that you can be something else for a couple hours and scare people. But then when you really actually get to do that, it’s so entertaining. It’s so fulfilling,” said Tucker, who is in his second year as a scare actor.

Renee Piehl is in her third year, this time around playing Nyx, based on the Greek goddess of night, who frightens guests waiting in line to enter the haunt.

“They come here to be scared. It’s Halloween. It’s fun,” she said. “We are to be ugly and scary and bloody.”

Plus, the scarier the actors are, the bigger the numbers will get on the Wimp Out Score Board.

The board currently lists 10,711 “wimps” and 1,246 “wetters, pukers & fainters” both cumulative totals since the Terebuses’ father and uncle opened the attraction.

“What we have throughout the haunted house, we call them ‘chicken exits.’ They’re actually fire exits,” Zac Terebus said. “But, at any point in the show, if you say, ‘I want out,’ we take you out, we escort you down, you end up here in the exit lobby, you can wait for your group to come on out.

“It’s a competition among our monsters to see who can really scare the pee out of somebody.”



PHOTOS BY RYAN SUN/AP

Visitors react while attending the Erebus Haunted House, on Saturday in Pontiac, Mich.



Renee Piehl, right, interacts with people waiting in line at the Erebus Haunted House, on Oct. 2.

Dubai chocolate craze turns from fad to mainstream mania

Associated Press

Some flavor crazes flirt with us and fade. Others stay and make themselves at home.

It’s too soon to tell for sure, but the Dubai chocolate movement seems to have put down roots and is spreading at a brisk clip. The sweet flavors and thick texture that have made Dubai chocolate bars a hit are morphing into other kinds of confections too.

Let’s back up for a minute. The original and now-classic Dubai chocolate bar was created by Fix Chocolatier in the United Arab Emirates in 2021, and by 2023 had exploded on social media. Rich and indulgent, it features a thick, milk chocolate shell usually encasing a creamy pistachio (and often tahini) filling mixed with crispy, shredded, phyllo-like pastry called kadayif.

Global brands and small bakers alike are riffing on the concept, translating it to croissants, milkshakes and more. Fillings range from peanut butter and jelly to s’mores to matcha.

“I don’t call this a ‘trend’ anymore — it’s a whole new thing,” said Din Allall, whose family business, The Nuts Factory, has about 150 U.S. stores featuring nuts, dried fruits and candies.



DANIEL NIEMANN/AP

Dubai chocolate pieces in a Lindt shop in Aachen, Germany.

The craze has even contributed to a pistachio shortage this year, the Iranian nut producer Keinia has reported. It said the primary reason for the shortage is “the explosive surge in demand fueled by the viral ’Dubai chocolate’ TikTok trend, compounded by underlying supply constraint.”

Globally, Google searches for “Dubai chocolate” shot up quickly at the start of the year before peaking in March. They’ve remained elevated since then, according to Google Trends.

Allall carries 12 flavors of Dubai chocolate bar, as well as chocolate- and pistachio-covered Dubai dates, Dubai-coated roasted nuts, a layered Dubai chocolate strawberry parfait, and a Dubai Golden Chocolate bar infused with edible 24-karat gold for $79.99 (their regular 6.5-ounce bars sell for $18.99).

It’s not just the flavors that make Dubai chocolate different, Allall says, but the bar’s structure too — “huge, thick, with lots of filling.”

Trader Joe’s carries a Dubai chocolate bar made by Patislove. IHOP introduced a limited-time Dubai pancake stack in some locations in August. Baskin-Robbins has some Dubai-inspired ice cream products on its menu, while Costco sells a range of Dubai chocolate confections, including a Dubai chocolate cake. Walmart and QVC also sell Dubai chocolate.

Swiss chocolate giant Lindt has a bar, and drew crowds when it debuted a limited number of them in Europe last fall.

“For me, it’s the crunch,” said Erica Lefkowits, who was buying some Dubai chocolate recently in Dublin. “The chocolate is soft and melty, and the filling is creamy, and then the crunch of the kadayif. It’s all about the texture. Plus, it’s sugar.”

She was a little annoyed at the price, higher than your average chocolate bar. Part of Dubai chocolate’s appeal, though, is the way it feels simultaneously indulgent and worldly. Pistachios, rose, saffron and cardamom bring luxury, travel and exoticism to the chocolate party.

In the U.S., Dubai chocolate is still a relatively niche product. In the 52 weeks ending June 28, U.S. retail sales of pistachio-filled chocolate totaled $822,900, according to the market research company NielsenIQ. By comparison, sales of all chocolates totaled $16.27 billion.

Still, demand for Dubai chocolate is growing much faster than demand for other varieties. Unit sales of pistachio-filled chocolates were up 1,234% compared to the previous year, NielsenIQ said, while unit sales of all chocolates fell less than 1%.

NATION

Man arrested in deadly Pacific Palisades blaze

BY CHRISTOPHER WEBER AND ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Authorities in California charged a 29-year-old man with starting a fire that days later erupted into the most destructive blaze in Los Angeles history and destroyed much of the Pacific Palisades neighborhood, federal law enforcement officials announced Wednesday.

Authorities accused 29-year-old Jonathan Rinderknecht of lighting a fire on New Year's Day that was put out initially but continued to smolder underground before reigniting during high winds, acting U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli said during a news conference.

Rinderknecht fled the scene of the original fire but returned to the same trail where he'd been earlier to watch it burn, Essayli said. During an interview with investigators, he lied about his location, claiming he was near the bottom of the hiking trail, Essayli said.

He was arrested Tuesday in Florida and was due to appear in court Wednesday. Essayli declined to say how investigators believe Rinderknecht started the Jan. 1 fire.

The blaze, which erupted on Jan. 7, killed 12 people and destroyed more than 6,000 homes and buildings in the Pacific Palisades, a wealthy coastal neighborhood of LA. The fire ripped through hillside neighborhoods, destroying mansions with spectacular views of the ocean and downtown Los Angeles.

Investigators determined the fire was intentionally lit, likely by a lighter taken to vegetation or paper, the according to a criminal complaint said.

Authorities first interviewed Rinderknecht on Jan. 24, according to the criminal complaint. He told them he had been in the area on Jan. 1 and did not see anyone else in the area at that time.

Investigators excluded other possibilities including fireworks, lightning and power lines. Authorities also looked into whether a cigarette could've caused the fire but concluded that was not the cause, the complaint says.

Investigators still haven't determined the cause of a second blaze called the Eaton Fire, which broke out the same day in the community of Altadena and killed 18 people.



KEVIN RIDLEY, LOWE'S/AP

A customer welcome back Francine, the store cat Tuesday, after she disappeared unexpectedly in September, at the Richmond, Va.

Missing Virginia store cat found after hitching ride to another state

Associated Press

Francine the calico cat is back home at a Lowe's store in Virginia after going missing for a few weeks, hitching a ride on a truck that turned up at a sister facility in another state.

Two employees from a Lowe's in Richmond made the 90-minute drive early Monday to pick up Francine, who disappeared in September and recently was discovered at the company's distribution center in Garysburg, N.C.

She was back on the job Tuesday, playing with customers, posing for photos and soaking in affection.

"Francine is one of us," store supervisor Wayne Schneider said in a telephone interview. "She's just amazing. What she means here to the store and the employees, you really can't imagine the outpouring that the employees and also the customers give her daily."

Francine spends much of her time either at the customer service desk or in the store's seasonal area. But things went awry in September as the store brought in items for the upcoming Christmas season. Store general manager Mike Sida said that disruption may have prompted Francine to seek comfort elsewhere.

After store employees hadn't seen Francine for a few days, they reviewed past surveillance video. There were glimpses of her in the appliance section and then the receiving department, where she darted into a truck. An overnight manager is then seen shutting the truck's door and off it went to Garysburg, about 85 miles to the south.

"And then, of course, when she got down to the distribution center, she shot off the truck," Sida said. "That's when we found out where she was and she was missing."

An animal control office set up humane traps at the distribution center, where photos of Francine were posted throughout. The center had dozens of monitoring cameras, and Lowe's brought in thermal drones to survey the area. An Instagram account unaffiliated with Lowe's dedicated to finding Francine grew to more than 34,000 followers.

On Saturday, Francine was spotted on camera near the distribution center. After more humane traps were installed, a volunteer checked each trap throughout the night. Finally, one of the traps triggered and Francine's meows could be heard.

Schneider and Sida got in a car early Monday and drove to get Francine.

"That ride going down, knowing that we were going to get her, was just heartwarming. Knowing she's safe and that she's coming back to the store to get off her two-week vacation," Schneider said.

Unlike Lowe's employees, Francine does not wear a vest. She had been previously outfitted with several collars but escaped them all. Now they plan on fitting her with a harness that includes identifying information.

A local brewery planned to host a "Francine Fest" community event on Wednesday to celebrate the homecoming, while the store is planning its own team party.

Norwegian prince visits Minn. to mark 200 years of emigration to the US

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Norwegian Crown Prince Haakon visited Minnesota on Tuesday as part of a tour marking the 200th anniversary of organized emigration from his homeland to the United States, highlighting the deep connections between the two countries.

The Upper Midwest has some of the largest concentrations of Scandinavian Americans in the U.S., and Minnesota has well over 800,000 residents who claim Norwegian ancestry, according to state demographers. That's more than any other state. Nearly 5 million North Americans have Norwegian roots.

The crown prince began the day in Minneapolis at Norway House, which brings contemporary Norway to the U.S. through arts, commerce and culture. He was greeted by a large crowd, including women, girls and boys wearing colorful traditional bunad costumes, and others clad in more modern Norwegian sweaters.

"For generations, the United States and Norway have stood side by side," he said at a business summit. "Building on this partnership, we can continue to develop solutions that are sustainable, innovative and future-oriented."

Haakon also cut a ribbon to open Norway House's new Saga Center. It's an immersive, interactive exhibit for families to explore their connections with Norway, where they can also navigate 3D outdoor and urban landscapes to learn about the country's friluftsliv (outdoor life) and byliv (city life).

Haakon then went to the state Capitol in nearby St. Paul to meet with Gov. Tim Walz, who said his state takes deep pride in its Norwegian heritage, calling it "foundational to what we are as Minnesotans."

The crown prince noted that a third of Norway's population left in the first 100 years of mass emigration, with 800,000 heading to the U.S.



ABBIE PARR/AP

Crown Prince Haakon of Norway arrives at the Norway House in Minneapolis on Tuesday.

"Some people, analysts have had a theory that everyone with any initiative left for the United States in that period," Haakon told reporters, jokingly. "I hope that for those of us who stayed, that's not entirely true. ... I think, in Norway, we developed at the same time. And today there's very much a benefit from that history, because, of course, bonds between nations (are) bonds between persons, people."

The crown prince's agenda also included a visit to Mindekirken, the Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church in Minneapolis, which still holds services in Norwegian. Haakon's mother, Queen Sonja, visited the church in 2022 for its 100th anniversary.

Haakon also has a visit set for Wednesday to St. Olaf College in Northfield, a school south of Minneapolis that was founded by Norwegian immigrants and has hosted several royal visits.

WORLD

Top US, Qatari officials joining Gaza peace talks

By Samy Magdy
Associated Press

CAIRO — President Donald Trump's top adviser for the Mideast and other senior officials joined the third day of talks between Israel and Hamas in an Egyptian resort Wednesday, a sign that negotiators aim to dive deeply into the toughest issues of a U.S. plan to end the war in Gaza.

Hamas says it's seeking firm guarantees from Trump and mediators that Israel won't resume its military campaign in the Palestinian territory after the militant group releases all the remaining hostages.

All sides have expressed optimism for a deal to end the two-year war that has left tens of thousands of Palestinians dead and most of the Gaza Strip destroyed. But key parts of the peace plan still haven't been agreed to, including a requirement that Hamas disarm, the timing and extent of an Israeli troop withdrawal from Gaza, and the creation of an international body to run the territory after Hamas steps down.

Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, arrived Wednesday at Sharm el-Sheikh for the discussions, as did Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's top adviser, Ron Dermer.

Representatives from fringe militant groups, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Palestinian Islamic Jihad — which holds an unknown number of Israeli hostages — are scheduled to arrive later Wednesday, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media. Their attendance underscores the aim of the talks to encompass all Palestinian groups.

As Qatari, Egyptian and U.S. mediators met with both sides in preliminary talks on Wednesday morning, a senior Hamas official, Taher Nounou, said the group has provided a list of Palestinian prisoners it wants released from Israel in return for hostages in Gaza as part of the deal.

Trump's peace planThe plan calls for an immediate ceasefire and release of the 48 hostages that militants in Gaza still hold from their surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, that started the war and triggered Israel's devastating retaliation. Around 20 of the hostages are believed to still be alive.

It envisions Israel withdrawing its troops from Gaza after Hamas disarms, and an international security force moving in. The territory would be placed under international governance, with Trump and former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair overseeing it.

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said Wednesday in televised comments that the negotiations so far "were very encouraging."

Netanyahu has accepted Trump's plan. His office said Tuesday that Israel was "cautiously optimistic," framing the talks as technical negotiations over a plan that both sides already had approved.

In a statement Tuesday, Hamas reiterated its longstanding demands for a lasting ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, but said nothing about disarmament, a step it has long resisted.

Hamas has also spoken against the idea of international rule, though it has agreed it will have no role in governing post-war Gaza.



FREEDOM FLOTILLA COALITION/AP

Live stream footage from the Sumud Flotilla's Gaza Sunbird 1 vessel showed an Israeli soldier trying to reach the camera, in Eastern Mediterranean sea, on Wednesday.

Israeli military troops intercept another flotilla heading to Gaza

By Melanie Lidman and Renata Brito
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — The Israeli military intercepted a nine-boat flotilla trying to break Israel's naval blockade of Gaza early Wednesday in the Mediterranean Sea and detained scores of activists on board, the flotilla organizers and the Israeli Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry said the 145 activists taking part in effort by Freedom Flotilla Coalition & Thousand Madleens to Gaza were in good health and were being brought to shore in Israel for processing before they are deported.

The interception came after nearly 450 activists from a previous, high-profile flotilla — including European lawmakers and climate activist Greta Thunberg — were intercepted on more than 40 boats last week trying to reach Gaza with a symbolic amount of humanitarian aid.

While most of the activists of the Global Sumud Flotilla have been deported, six of them — from Norway, Morocco and Spain — remain detained in Israel, lawyers representing them said Tuesday.

The organizers of this latest flotilla decried the new detentions on Wednesday as "arbitrary and unlawful."

The activists on board the nine-vessel group included doctors, at least one member of the European parliament and several national lawmakers from Turkey, Denmark, France and Belgium.

The flotilla was carrying food and medical aid destined for Gaza hospitals.

"Another futile attempt to breach the legal naval blockade and enter a combat zone ended in nothing," the Foreign Ministry wrote on X.

Organizers said the fleet was intercepted around 120 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza. Cameras aboard the vessels, one large passenger ship and eight smaller sailboats, broadcast the interceptions live.

The boats could be seen being approached by fast-moving ships and then boarded by Israeli troops, who then cut off the broadcast.

Activists also said an Israeli helicopter flew over them. No injuries were reported.

Turkey strongly condemned and called Israel's latest interception in international waters an "act of piracy."

Its Foreign Ministry said Wednesday it was a serious violation of international law and accused Israel of escalating tensions and undermining peace efforts.

Turkey has launched diplomatic efforts to secure the immediate release and safe return of its citizens and was coordinating with other countries regarding the status of other activists, the statement said.

The interceptions last week of the Global Sumud Flotilla drew widespread condemnation and sparked large protests in several major cities and a one-day strike across Italy.

Hundreds of hikers rescued from Mount Everest after storm

Associated Press

BEIJING — About 900 hikers, guides and other staff who were stranded by a weekend snowstorm on the Chinese side of Mount Everest have reached safety, state media said late Tuesday.

A severe storm struck the area Saturday night, cutting off access to where the hikers were staying in tents at an altitude of more than 16,000 feet.

In all, 580 hikers and more than 300 guides, yak herders and other workers were stranded. About 350 hikers were able to descend by noon Monday and the rest had arrived by Tuesday, state media said, citing the local government.

Some hikers reportedly had hypothermia, and the official Xinhua News Agency said about a dozen of them were escorted to a meeting point by teams with food, medicine, heating and oxygen supplies.

The scenic area at Mount Everest in China's Tibet region has been temporarily closed. The 29,000-foot peak, the world's highest, straddles the border with Nepal.

The storm struck during a weeklong holiday that ends Wednesday. Many Chinese travel at home and abroad during the holiday, which marks the anniversary of the start of Communist Party rule in China on Oct. 1, 1949.

In Nepal, a South Korean climber died in a weekend storm near the summit of Mera Peak, a 21,250-foot Himalayan mountain south of Everest.

Early-season snowstorms hit at least two other areas in western China over the weekend, killing one person and stranding motorists on an icy and snowy highway near a scenic hiking spot.

More than 200 people were evacuated from a remote and rugged valley in the Qilian Mountains in Qinghai province. One person died of hypothermia and altitude sickness.

The area is undeveloped, and authorities later warned people against entering without permission, citing the difficult terrain, unpredictable weather and an average altitude of more than 13,000 feet.

In northwest China's Xinjiang region, the Kanas scenic area was closed after a snowstorm Sunday that stranded motorists on a nearby highway. The road had been cleared by Monday, state media said.

WORLD

Russian strike seriously damages Ukrainian power plant

By Illia Novikov
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia seriously damaged one of Ukraine's thermal power plants in an overnight attack, authorities said Wednesday, as Moscow pursued its campaign to deny Ukrainians heat, light and running water as winter approaches.

Two workers were injured in the attack, according to DTEK, Ukraine's biggest electricity operator. It provided no further information, including the plant's location.

Ukrainian authorities release few details about the routine Russian attacks on its power grid so as not to give away intelligence to the enemy. Repair crews, meanwhile, work round the clock to undo the damage.

The energy sector has been a key battleground since Russia launched its all-out invasion of its neighbor more than three years ago.



Dan Bashakov/AP

A local resident sits on a bench with her pet dog during a blackout following Russia's air attacks on energy facilities in Chernihiv, Ukraine, late Tuesday.

Each year, Russia has tried to cripple the Ukrainian power grid ahead of the bitter winter, hoping to erode public morale and disrupt military manufacturing. Ukraine has accused Moscow of weaponizing winter.

Ukraine's winter runs from late October through March, with January and February being the coldest months.

Ukraine, meanwhile, has been hitting back with long-range strikes on the Russian energy supply, recently causing outages in some Russian regions along the border.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Wednesday that its air defenses overnight intercepted 53 Ukrainian drones over nine Russian regions.

The Ukrainian town of Shostka, in the northeastern Sumy region, has been hard hit by the Russian onslaught against the power supply, officials say.

Authorities there have put up tents where locals can warm up, drink hot tea, charge their phones and receive psychological support, according to regional head Oleh Hryhorov.

He posted photos on Telegram of people cooking in outdoor kitchens in the street over open fires on Tuesday.

Shostka Mayor Mykola Noha posted the locations of 11 places in the town where locals can get food and tea. "Please bring your own dishes," he wrote on Facebook Wednesday morning.

Russia also struck energy infrastructure in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv, southern Kherson and southeastern Dnipropetrovsk regions, authorities said.

Ukraine's air force said it intercepted or jammed 154 out of 183 Russian strike and decoy drones fired at the country overnight.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian rockets killed three people and wounded one more in Russia's Belgorod border region, where previous attacks have brought power outages, Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said Wednesday.

Nobel Prize winner in chemistry likened to an enchanted handbag

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — Scientists Susumu Kitagawa, Richard Robson and Omar M. Yaghi won the Nobel Prize in chemistry on Wednesday for their development of metal/organic frameworks that could play a part in solving some of humanity's greatest challenges. An expert likened the discovery to Hermione Granger's enchanted handbag in the fictional "Harry Potter" series.

From capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere or sucking water out of dry desert air, the trio's new form of molecular architecture can absorb and contain gases inside stable metal organic frameworks.

The frameworks can be compared to the timber framework of a house and Hermione's famous beaded handbag, in that they are small on the outside but very large on the inside, according to Olof Ramström, a member of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry.

The chemists worked separately but added to each other's breakthroughs, which began in 1989 with Robson.

"Metal-organic frameworks have enormous potential, bringing previously unforeseen opportunities for custom-made materials with new functions," Heiner Linke, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, said in a news release.

The committee cited the potential for using the frameworks to separating so-called "forever chemicals" from water.

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are a group of chemicals that have been around for decades and have now spread into the air, water and soil. They are also referred to as "forever chemicals."

Hans Ellegren, secretary-general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, announced Wednesday's prize in Stockholm. It was the third prize announced this week.

Robson, 88, is affiliated with the University of Melbourne in Australia. Kitagawa, 74, is with Japan's Kyoto University and Yaghi, 60, with the University of California, Berkeley.

Kitagawa spoke to the committee, and the press, over the phone Wednesday after his win was announced.

"I'm deeply honored and delighted that my long-standing research has been recognized," he said.

The 88-year-old Robson, in a phone call with The Associated Press, said he was "very pleased of course and a bit stunned as well."

"This is a major thing that happens late in life when I'm not really in a condition to withstand it all," he said. "But here we are."



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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Teen decapitates mom's boyfriend

NY NEW YORK — A troubled teenager lopped off the head of his mother's boyfriend in a bloody knife attack inside the bathroom of their Staten Island home Monday afternoon, the Daily News has learned.

Police rushed to the scene around 4:24 p.m. in West Brighton, where a 35-year-old man was stabbed multiple times in the head and neck in the bathtub, police sources said.

The man's head was severed in the ruthless rampage, the sources said.

The teen's sister saw the horrific carnage after arriving home from school, the sources said.

"I did something bad," the teen told his sister, according to sources.

EMS pronounced the victim dead at the scene. His identity was withheld as police search for family members.

Police nabbed the teen shortly after the gruesome slaying. Charges were pending in the case.

The teen was on various medications and was said to be emotionally disturbed, police sources told The News.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Cruising by shapes of the city

A crew team on the Charles River rows past Boston University's Center for Computing & Data Sciences, also known as the "Jenga Building," Monday in Boston. The unique stacked structure, which actually had nothing to do with Jenga, was inspired by the idea of a vertical neighborhood. Geothermal wells about 1,500 feet deep into the ground heat and cool the building.

Alligator chilling at tiki bar returned to wild

FL STUART — One of Florida's alligators is getting laughs on social media after it was caught trying to blend in with the landscaping at a tiki bar.

The odd discovery was made Monday at Harlow's Hideout, which summoned the Stuart Police Department.

The cops thought it was funny, too.

"An alligator walks into a bar ... No, seriously," Stuart police wrote in a Facebook post.

The outdoor bar acknowledged it was "not an ordinary afternoon," and noted it was a case of "gator on the rocks (with) cops for the chaser."

Photos show the alligator was a juvenile, about 4 feet long, and it was found behind a row of lounge chairs.

"The party-seeking reptile has since been relocated to a more suitable venue, where the only cocktails are in the swamp and the sun never sets on happy hour," police said.

State close to clearing expungement backlog

NJ NEWARK — State public defenders reached an agreement with the Essex County Prosecutor's Office last week to process expungements more quickly.

The consent order, issued by the state Supreme Court, stems from a lawsuit the state Office of the Public Defender filed earlier this year against the prosecutor's office. Public defenders alleged prosecutors were delaying expungement applications.

The lawsuit said hundreds of Essex County residents waited more than 60 days, with some waiting months and up to a year for expungements. That exceeded the timelines required by state law.

"This agreement ensures that Essex County residents who have earned a second chance will no longer face indefinite delays," Public Defender Jennifer Selitti said.

The Essex County Prosecutor's Office supported the agreement.

Beginning in March, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office must keep its backlog below 20%.

Composting keeps ton of food waste from landfills

MI MUSKEGON — A new composting program hosted at the Muskegon Farmers Market has already saved one ton of food waste from going to the landfill after one month in operation.

Green Michigan is a Muskegon-based, West Michigan nonprofit that provides sustainability education and programming.

For the last month, Director Angela Fox has been running a weekly compost program at the downtown Muskegon farmers market, allowing people to drop off their food scraps for a fee.

Fox has a stand under a green umbrella each week at the center of the farmers market where people drop off food waste: food scraps including dairy, meat and bones.

It costs $3 for a one-time drop off of up to two five-gallon buckets worth of food waste.

For $10 a month, people can drop off as many times as they want, which Fox said has been utilized by people who come to the farmers market every week.

Lawsuit challenges lot gift for Trump's library

FL TALLAHASSEE — A Miami activist alleges that city officials violated Florida's open government law when they gifted a sizable plot of prime downtown real estate to the state, which then transferred it to the foundation for Donald Trump's future presidential library.

The nearly 3-acre property is a developer's dream and is valued at more than $67 million, according to a 2025 assessment by the Miami-Dade County property appraiser.

One of the last undeveloped lots on an iconic stretch of palm tree-lined Biscayne Boulevard, one real estate expert wagered that the parcel could sell for hundreds of millions of dollars more.

Marvin Dunn, an activist and chronicler of local Black history, filed a lawsuit Monday in a Miami-Dade County court against the Board of Trustees for Miami Dade College, a state-run school that previously owned the property. He alleges that the board violated Florida's Government in the Sunshine law by not providing sufficient notice for its special meeting on Sept. 23, when it voted to give up the land, and he's seeking to block the land transfer.

"No one not already in on the deal would have had any idea from this 'notice' of what the District Board of Trustees was actually planning to do," the lawsuit states.

Listeria found in spinach of some meal kits

DC WASHINGTON — Federal health officials late Monday warned people not to eat certain Hello Fresh subscription meal kits containing spinach that may be contaminated with listeria.

The U.S. Agriculture Department issued a public health alert for the meals, which were produced by FreshRealm, the San Clemente, Calif.-based company linked to an expanding listeria outbreak tied to heat-and-eat pasta meals.

The products include 10.1-ounce containers of Hello Fresh Ready Made Meals Cheesy Pulled Pork Pepper Pasta and 10-ounce containers of Hello Fresh Ready Made Meals Unstuffed Peppers with Ground Turkey.

Both were shipped directly to consumers.

The pork pepper pasta is identified with establishment number Est. 47718 and lot code 49107 or Est. 2937 and lot code 48840. The unstuffed peppers with ground turkey is identified with Est. P-47718 and lot codes 50069, 50073 or 50698.

Canine may sniff out human waste in drains

MI FLINT — The city may be putting a specially trained canine to work sniffing out human waste in stormwater drains and outfalls to prevent it from entering local streams, creeks and the Flint River.

The City Council is expected to consider accepting a grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy for the program during a committee meeting on Wednesday.

With the $39,970 grant, the city wants to purchase a scent detection dog trained to smell for human waste and ignore animal feces in Flint's 345 outfalls, 8,338 manholes and 14,962 catch basins.

Flint officials say they expect the new program to improve water quality in multiple bodies of water, including the Flint River, Gilkey and Kearsley creeks, and the Carr Drain.

From The Associated Press and Tribune News Service

FACES

Dancing to her dreams

Hendrix of 'Parent Trap' comes full circle on reality show competition

BY RODNEY HO
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Actress Elaine Hendrix's best-known film role is 1998's "The Parent Trap," where she plays Meredith Blake, the antagonist to Lindsay Lohan's twin characters.

Often perceived as an evil stepmom, Meredith has found defenders on social media in recent years who see her more as a pragmatic go-getter. This renewed attention led to "Dancing with the Stars" inviting her to compete on Season 34.

"All my touchstones of pop culture are coinciding right now thanks to TikTok and the millennials," Hendrix told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution in a phone interview from Los Angeles, where she is camped out for as long as she remains on the show. "It's not so much a resurgence as a redemption for my character. From the beginning, I had to justify the actions of Meredith."

Hendrix, currently in the middle of the pack among the 12 remaining dancers based on judges' scores, isn't focused on competing against the other celebrities. For her, it's about the experience.

"I just want to keep dancing," she said. "I love the process ... This was a dream I had to let go a long time ago."

A Tennessee native, Hendrix spent part of her teen years in Atlanta and, after high school, pursued a career in dance, focused on modern and contemporary jazz.

But in 1992, she was cycling in Los Angeles when a car hit her, causing injuries that ended her dance career. "I spent months in physical therapy," she said. She pivoted and pursued acting, which led to roles in films and TV shows like "Romy and Michele's High School Reunion," "Superstar," and, more recently, "Dynasty" on the CW as Alexis Carrington.

Hendrix, who recently reunited with Lohan in "Freakier Friday," is friends with Tom Bergeron, the former longtime host of "Dancing with the Stars."

"I used to go to live tapings frequently when I lived in Los Angeles," she said. "I have always loved the art form. Now I've become part of it!"

So far, Hendrix calls the experience "part excitement, part terrifying. I'm really working to shift more into the excitement of it. I have a lot to learn. I have to unlearn. I have a lot to relearn. I knew going in this would be hard, but I didn't know just how hard!"

The tango, she said, was the most difficult for her to date. "There are intricacies to it that are not intuitive to me," she said. "I'm tall. I'm always told to keep my frame straight and shoulders back. In the tango you need to have your shoulders and head back and your knees bent. It's not natural."

But she isn't complaining. She is practicing four hours a day with her dance partner Alan Bersten, learning different ballroom dances each week. This is the first time she's done any dance training since her accident.

"In real life, I'd never be able to do this," she said. "I may never have an opportunity like this again."

At age 54, Hendrix is the second-oldest person in the cast after "Conan" sidekick Andy Richter (58) and just a few months younger than actor Corey Feldman, also 54, who was one of the first contestants to be eliminated.

"I want to prove to myself, to Alan and to people watching that women of a certain age, we don't stop," she said. "I love the hard work this takes. This brings me joy. I feel like I'm built for this. I love the focus this requires. I want to be the best I can be."

The judges so far have raved about her ability to perform on stage, but have nitpicked issues with her shoulders and her core.

"Performing is the least of my worries," she said, noting that she takes the critiques seriously: "It's part of what fuels me. I've had injuries. My shoulders are only going to do so much. I am pushing my body as far as I can without hurting myself."

New episodes of "Dancing with the Stars" air Tuesdays on ABC and stream on Hulu and Disney+.



MONICA SCHIPPER, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Professional dancer Alan Bersten, left, and Elaine Hendrix are contestants on the current season of "Dancing with the Stars."

Country singer Zach Bryan critical of ICE in new song

From wire reports

Grammy Award-winning country singer-songwriter Zach Bryan teased a new song that appeared to criticize U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, drawing online backlash from some of his more conservative fans.

Bryan — who rose to fame releasing his songs on social media — posted a one-minute clip of his new ballad on Instagram last week. He sings, "ICE is gonna come bust down your door," and refers to the police as "cocky," followed by an expletive.

Unofficial transcribed lyrics from Zach Bryan's Instagram post: "My friends are all degenerates, but they're all I got / The generational story of dropping the plot / I heard the cops came. Cocky mother——ers, ain't they? / And ICE is gonna come bust down your door / Try to build a house, no bills no more, well I got a telephone / Kids are all scared and all alone."

He later sings, "Got some bad news: the fading of red, white and blue."

Some social media users praised the lyrics, though many others accused Bryan of wavering patriotism and pandering to left-wing audiences.

"Thank you for using your talent and standing up for what's morally correct," one Instagram account wrote.

Another user commented, "Didn't know Zach was an illegal sympathizer," referring to immigrants without legal status in the United States.

"Good luck with the new fan base," one user said.



Bryan

ICE has come under heavy scrutiny for its violent raids across U.S. cities, which have detained thousands of people — including U.S. citizens and people with legal status in the United States — and held many under harsh conditions, at times without legal representation. Some have disappeared, with no explanation provided by the government as to where they may be.

Bryan, 29, an Oklahoma native who served in the Navy and has described himself as a "total libertarian," has appeared hesitant at times to wade into politics but has nonetheless garnered thousands of fans aligned with President Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again," or MAGA, movement. In a 2022 interview with the New York Times, he described his attempts to stop his crowds from chanting vulgar phrases about President Joe Biden.

He has also denied being a country singer, saying that he wants to be in the "Springsteen, Kings of Leon, Ed Sheeran at-the-very-beginning space."

In 2023, he spoke out against "insulting transgender people" amid right-wing backlash against Bud Light for its campaign featuring a transgender activist. "I just think insulting transgender people is completely wrong because we live in a country where we can all just be who we want to be," he wrote on his now-deleted X account, adding: "It's a great day to be alive I thought."

Swift says she did not turn down Super Bowl 2026 halftime show

Taylor Swift says she did not turn down the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show, which will be headlined by Bad Bunny on Feb. 8.

"The Life of a Showgirl" singer paid a visit to "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" on Monday and dispelled a few rumors. Most notably, she shared she did not turn down the NFL's biggest stage because she wouldn't be allowed to own the performance footage, as claimed in a popular internet rumor.

"No, no, no," Swift said.

The Super Bowl halftime show is produced by the NFL, Apple Music and Roc Nation — the latter founded by music mogul Jay-Z.

"Jay-Z has always been very good to me. Our teams are really close. Like, they sometimes will call and say, 'How does she feel about the Super Bowl?' And that's not like an official offer or, like, an official conference room conversation," Swift told Fallon. "We're always able to tell him the truth, which is that, like, I am in love with a guy who does that sport on that actual field," she continued, referring to fiancé Travis Kelce — a tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs.

"Like, that is violent chess. That is gladiators without swords. That is dangerous. The whole season I am locked in on what that man is doing on the field," she said.

Other news

■ **Mary J. Blige** is bringing her iconic stage presence to the big screen with her first concert film, "Mary J. Blige: For My Fans, Live From Madison Square Garden." The Grammy and Emmy-winning artist announced Wednesday that the film will be released exclusively in theaters on Nov. 5 and 8. It captures her sold-out performance at Madison Square Garden in April during her For My Fans tour. The film features performances from her three-decade career, including hits like "Be Without You" and "Family Affair." It also includes behind-the-scenes footage and surprise guest appearances.

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OPINION

Politicians need to stop being so online

BY DAVID M. DRUCKER
Bloomberg Opinion

Twitter is not the town square. Someone might want to alert American political leaders.

In the era of social media, Democratic and Republican politicians have grown hyper-sensitive, and responsive, to activists who seemingly live their lives online. Whether on X, formerly Twitter, where the right ruminates over every alleged infraction committed by the left and demands swift and often constitutionally questionable action; on Bluesky, where the echo-chamber boomerangs in the opposite direction; on Truth Social, where President Donald Trump ruminates over, well, everything; or on Facebook and TikTok, Democrats and Republicans appear only too eager to satisfy the digital mob, convinced that social media is simply a gathering place where constituents are communicating their priorities. They're wrong.

I've long argued as much, based on years of traveling the country and talking to voters, including those interested enough in politics to attend campaign rallies or knock on doors for candidates. But fresh polling from the Democratic firm Global Strategy Group adds some data to bolster my conclusion.

As pollster Angela Kuefler explained during a presentation for Third Way, the centrist Democratic think tank in Washington that commissioned the survey, just 37% of Democratic primary voters post on social media platforms weekly, with 33% posting less often and 31% never posting.

That's nearly two-thirds of Democratic primary voters — even at a moment of major political discontent and anxiety over Trump, to say nothing of the future of their party.

"This is the most important slide," Kuefler declared, as she introduced these findings to reporters last week, during an expansive PowerPoint presentation. How so? Because Kuefler's (and Third Way's) goal ahead of the 2028 presidential contest is to convince Democrats to stop choosing rhetoric and policy proposals based on what they're hearing and reading from a minority of activist voters on social media.

"People who post the most often," Kuefler added, "are fundamentally different than the vast majority of these Democratic primary voters," leading many elected Democrats to embrace "far left policies" that even most Democratic voters oppose, never mind the broader electorate.

Kamala Harris, the former vice president and 2024 Democratic nominee, might wish she'd had this data, and heeded that advice, when seeking the White House in 2020. In 2024, Trump wouldn't have been able to run as many effective television spots against her. But as mentioned, Democrats are hardly the lone offenders.

Top GOP figures, too, often mistake the rantings of right-wing activists and influencers for political gospel. But only a minority of GOP voters and those who lean Republican "regularly" rely on social media for news.

At 40%, Facebook is the most frequented social platform for news by Republicans and GOP leaners. At 14%, Elon Musk's X is among the least used for news, per a Pew Research Center poll conducted in late August. This survey data matches my experience with Republican voters.

But to check my priors, I consulted with Washington Examiner columnist Salena Zito, who lives just outside Pittsburgh and covers Republican voters in Rust Belt battlegrounds (and elsewhere) like a hawk, and keenly understands their connection to Trump. Zito's verdict?

"It has been my experience as a reporter to take everything that I see online with a grain of salt. In other words, the audience tends to skew more toward people who are, what I call — and what other people call — 'the very online,' " said Zito, author of "Butler; The Untold Story of the Near Assassination of Donald Trump and the Fight for America's Heartland." "What I see online rarely gives [an accurate view of] what I see with voters, in particular in the places that decide elections."

"What happens on social media does not dictate how people are feeling. There's so much nuance that's missing," she added. "You really have to get on the ground and be much more granular with people as opposed to letting social media dictate how you think the country is feeling."

American politics appears to be drowning in combative commentary and internet memes. Republicans revel in "owning the libs." Prominent Democrats, intent on proving to their activist base that they're fighting to stop Trump, have dialed up profanity in their rhetoric. And yet, none of this is how most voters, left or right, are living their lives day-to-day. Worried about the economy; illegal immigration; Trump's multifaceted executive overreach? Absolutely. Angry and rude to their neighbors while fearing the end of the republic? Hardly.

During the final weekend before Election Day last year, my colleagues at The Dispatch and I fanned out across the swing states. At both Harris and Trump rallies, we asked supporters of each candidate how they would react, and what they would do, if the opposing White House contender won. They told us they would be disappointed and yes, worried, about the future. But virtually all voters we interviewed told us they would go about their everyday lives and hope for the best while looking ahead to the next election — as they always have.

Our leaders, and those interested in joining them in elected office, would do their political ambitions and the country well to realize that.

David M. Drucker is columnist covering politics and policy. He is also a senior writer for The Dispatch and the author of "In Trump's Shadow: The Battle for 2024 and the Future of the GOP."

Having no patience for complexity is a skewed reality

BY JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

A large subset of Americans is so disconcerted by a small subset of fellow citizens that the former sometimes tries to proclaim the latter out of existence, as President Donald Trump did in his inaugural address in January: "As of today, it will henceforth be the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders, male and female."

Well, sure. Most people fit reasonably into those two categories. But what about the citizens who don't reside comfortably in either? What do we do with them?

This dilemma reflects the fact that many of us don't have much patience for complexity. We prefer simplicity: black or white; us or them; girl or boy.

But the way humans were created or evolved is much more complicated. Most people feel like men or women, and their bodies reflect that reality. But the sexuality of a significant number of citizens is more complex.

Most are attracted to the opposite sex — which probably makes theological and evolutionary sense — but many are attracted to the same sex or to both sexes. And some have the body of one gender, but, they contend, the psyche of the other. Fond of simplicity, we often lump all this complexity under the general term LGBTQ+.

Part of the political right pretends that LGBTQ+ doesn't exist, and another part commits considerable energy to making their lives difficult.

Charlie Kirk is a good lens through which to consider the transgender slice of LGBTQ+. He called transgender citizens "abominations" and "a throbbing middle finger to God." Transgender was one of Kirk's favorite debate topics, and he often set up his inexperienced student opponents with this gambit: "What is a woman?" The students often took the bait, sometimes responding that a woman is anyone who identifies as a woman, a naive response that makes the same mistake that Kirk made: oversimplification.

Kirk's go-to marker for gender was chromosomes. He often asked his transgender interlocutors whether they are XX or XY. If they're XX, they're female; if XY they're male. Case closed.

But between 1 and 2% of Americans are born with chromosomal variations that don't fall neatly into these two categories. A person can be just X, with no Y, or XXY or a mixture of XX and XY cells. Some have both ovarian and testicular development and other physical variations that aren't easily identified as male or female. And while 1 to 2% is a small number, it translates into 3 to 6 million Americans.

But Kirk distinguished between men and women in other ways. He said women are far more likely to talk about "micro topics" — friends, relationships — and men are more likely to talk about "macro topics" — the stock market, politics, sports.

Even if Kirk was right about how men and women talk (I'm still skeptical) he didn't account for women who want to talk about sports and politics — and there are many — and men who are willing to talk about so-called "micro topics." Maybe the question Kirk should have been asking is "What is not a woman?"

Perhaps we can agree that an XY guy who drives a pickup and talks about sports is a man. And we can come up with a stereotypical XX counterpart. But it's presumptuous and somewhat arrogant to tell the citizens who fall in between these boundaries that they're just making things up. I've known some of these citizens — you have, too — and they deserve to be treated with dignity.

And with empathy. Kirk wasn't a fan of empathy. "I can't stand the word empathy," he said, calling it a "made-up, new-age term that has done a lot of damage."

I disagree. Empathy and appreciation for complexity. We need more of both.

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Texas.

Bizarro



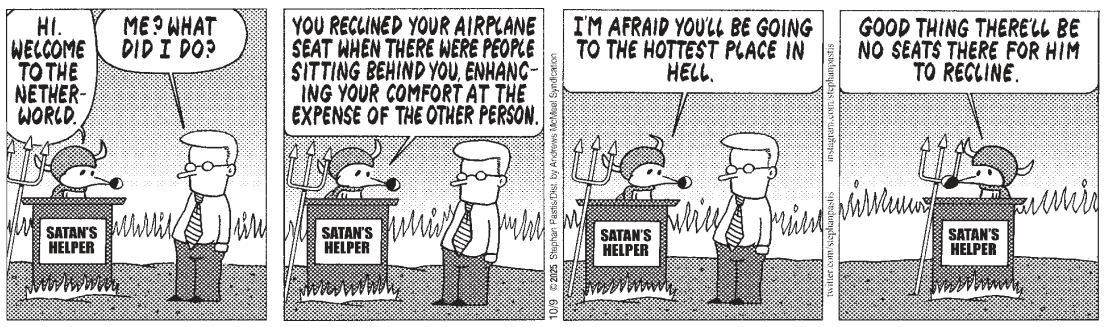
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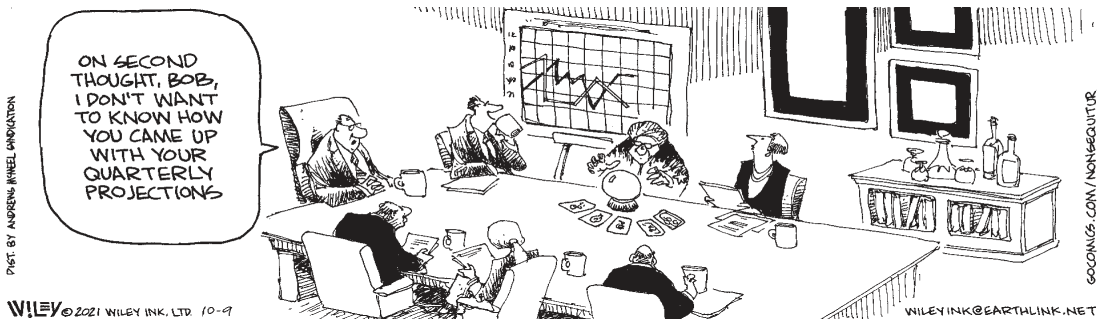
Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Wumo



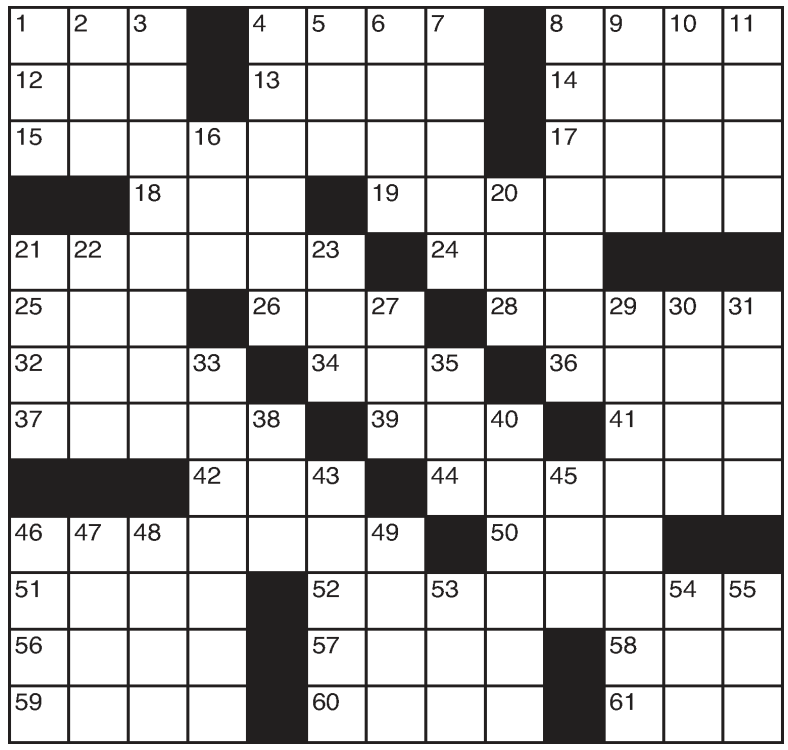
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

1 Orange tuber
4 Biceps, in gym-speak
8 Cornfield intruder
12 Numerical prefix
13 Scott Turow book
14 Abode
15 Lose
17 Muscat's land
18 Proof letters
19 Google search need
21 "House" actor Hugh
24 Writer's block?
25 Acapulco gold
26 Shade tree
28 Nation on the Red Sea
32 Morsels
34 Bear hair
36 Pudding variety
37 Ancient theater
39 River blocker
41 Madrid Mrs.
42 Permit
44 Finalize, as plans
46 Try one's best
50 "CSI" evidence
51 Bygone times
52 Labels incorrectly, time-wise
56 Pitcher
57 Bell sound
58 IRS employee
59 Droops
60 Ocular woe
61 Deli choice

DOWN

1 "Tasty!"
2 Singer DiFranco
3 Interviewee's dread
4 Actress/ producer Hawn
5 Italian article
6 Violin part
7 Doze
8 Oyster bar order
9 NFL analyst Tony
10 Epps of "House"
11 Travel
16 Part of MPH
20 "Rah!"
21 Timber wolf
22 Desertlike
23 Santa's helper
27 Wet dirt
29 Couple incorrectly
30 Beige
31 Tide type
33 Fuses together
35 U.K. military fliers
38 Born as
40 Core
43 Office part-timers
45 Genetic letters
46 Turns blue?
47 Caitlin Clark's home state
48 "Brady Bunch" son
49 Painter Mondrian
53 Utter
54 Clean air org.
55 "Stay with Me" singer Smith

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	P	A	■	P	E	S	T	■	D	A	B	S
R	E	G	■	A	R	T	E	■	E	R	A	S
O	R	O	■	T	R	U	E	H	E	A	R	T
S	U	G	A	R	■	■	M	U	M	■	■	■
■	■	■	B	O	R	G	■	B	E	Z	O	S
T	R	U	E	L	I	E	S	■	D	E	L	I
R	E	C	■	S	O	N	A	R	■	R	A	T
A	L	L	S	■	T	R	U	E	L	O	V	E
M	O	A	T	S	■	E	L	L	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	R	O	I	■	■	A	O	R	T	A
T	R	U	E	S	T	O	R	Y	■	E	A	R
O	O	Z	E	■	E	R	I	E	■	D	X	I
E	D	I	T	■	M	E	N	D	■	S	I	D

10-9

CRYPTOQUIP

RWOP RGVMK GBS NOMM PWS ESS NWOLTSK EGL NMOFFSF USDBT WSMK DB O UVNGMDN WGPSM? DBB PVDPDGB.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN I SPOTTED THAT FELLOW GENTLY PUSHING HIS BABY'S CRADLE BACK AND FORTH, I SAID, "YOU ROCK!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals C

SCOREBOARD/NFL

PRO FOOTBALL

American Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	4	1	0	.800	153	113
New England	3	2	0	.600	125	101
Miami	1	4	0	.200	107	145
N.Y. Jets	0	5	0	.000	112	157

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Indianapolis	4	1	0	.800	163	89
Jacksonville	4	1	0	.800	127	100
Houston	2	3	0	.400	108	61
Tennessee	1	4	0	.200	73	141

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	3	1	0	.750	96	98
Cincinnati	2	3	0	.400	85	156
Baltimore	1	4	0	.200	141	177
Cleveland	1	4	0	.200	73	123

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Denver	3	2	0	.600	117	84
L.A. Chargers	3	2	0	.600	98	98
Kansas City	2	3	0	.400	125	107
Las Vegas	1	4	0	.200	83	139

National Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	4	1	0	.800	125	109
Washington	3	2	0	.600	134	101
Dallas	2	2	1	.500	151	154
N.Y. Giants	1	4	0	.200	87	127

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	4	1	0	.800	135	132
Atlanta	2	2	0	.500	76	86
Carolina	2	3	0	.400	102	119
New Orleans	1	4	0	.200	92	135

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	4	1	0	.800	174	112
Green Bay	2	1	1	.625	104	84
Minnesota	3	2	0	.600	123	97
Chicago	2	2	0	.500	101	117

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	4	1	0	.800	106	98
L.A. Rams	3	2	0	.600	123	107
Seattle	3	2	0	.600	146	105
Arizona	2	3	0	.400	103	96

Thursday's game

Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants

Sunday's games

Denver vs N.Y. Jets at London
Arizona at Indianapolis
Cleveland at Pittsburgh
Dallas at Carolina
L.A. Chargers at Miami
L.A. Rams at Baltimore
New England at New Orleans
Seattle at Jacksonville
Tennessee at Las Vegas
Cincinnati at Green Bay
San Francisco at Tampa Bay
Detroit at Kansas City
Open: Houston, Minnesota

Monday's games

Buffalo at Atlanta
Chicago at Washington

Thursday, Oct. 16

Pittsburgh at Cincinnati

Sunday, Oct. 19

L.A. Rams vs. Jacksonville at London
Philadelphia at Minnesota
New Orleans at Chicago
Miami at Cleveland
Las Vegas at Kansas City
Carolina at N.Y. Jets
New England at Tennessee
N.Y. Giants at Denver
Indianapolis at L.A. Chargers
Green Bay at Arizona
Washington at Dallas
Atlanta at San Francisco
Open: Baltimore, Buffalo

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA Finals

(Best-of-seven)
Las Vegas 2, Phoenix 0

Las Vegas 89, Phoenix 86
Las Vegas 91, Phoenix 78
Wednesday: at Phoenix
Friday: at Phoenix
x-Sunday: at Las Vegas
x-Wednesday, Oct. 15: at Phoenix
x-Friday, Oct. 17: at Las Vegas

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

CHARLOTTE HORNETS — Waived G DJ Rodman.
DALLAS MAVERICKS — Waived G Matthew Cleveland.
PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS — Waived F MarJon Beauchamp, F Andrew Carr and C Liam Robbins.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

NFL — Fined Dallas Cowboys owner and general manager Jerry Jones $250,000 for his inadvertent and obscene gesture toward fans at New York on Sunday.
BUFFALO BILLS — Signed LB Baylon Spector and CB Jalen Kimber to the practice squad. Released LB Otis Reese IV from the practice squad.
CAROLINA PANTHERS — Signed CB Keion Crossen and OL Darrian Dalcourt to the practice squad.
CINCINNATI BENGALS — Received QB Joe Flacco and a sixth-round draft pick from Cleveland in exchange for a fifth-round pick. Signed DT Howard Cross III to the practice squad. Released QB Mike White from the practice squad. Released QB Brett Rypien.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Placed K Spencer Shrader and CB Mike Hilton on injured reserve.
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Placed TE Brenton Strange on injured reserve. Signed WR Tim Jones to the practice squad. Released WR Erik Ezukanma from the practice squad.
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed P Brad Robbins to the practice squad.
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Re-signed RB Nyheim Hines to the practice squad. Signed C Josh Kaltenberger and WR Jalen Reagor to the practice squad. Released OL Michael Dunn and LB Kana'i Mauga from the practice squad.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed RB Jashaun Corbin to the practice squad. Released OL Royce Newman from the practice squad.
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Signed CB Michael Davis to the active roster. Released RB Velus Jones. Signed WR Ronnie Bell and TE Moliki Matavao to the practice squad. Released DE Garrett Nelson, OT Sataoa Laumea and WR Tommy Mellow from the practice squad.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Released LB Ja'Whaun Bentley from the practice squad. Signed RB Raheem Blackshear to the practice squad.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Released G Sua Opeta from the practice squad. Signed RB Owen Wright to the practice squad.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Waived WR Treylon Burks. Released CB Alex Johnson from the practice squad.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

ANAHEIM DUCKS — Waived G Ville Husso.
BUFFALO SABRES — Placed G Alexandar Georgiev on waivers.
CAROLINA HURRICANES — Placed F Juha Jaaska on waivers.
DALLAS STARS — Agreed to terms with F Adam Erne on a one-year, two-way contract. Placed F Jamie Benn on long-term injured reserve. Recalled D Lian Bichsel from Texas (AHL).
EDMONTON OILERS — Recalled Fs Isaac Howard and David Tomasek from Bakersfield (AHL).
FLORIDA PANTHERS — Placed Fs Tomas Nosek and Matthew Tkachuk on non-roster, injured reserve. Placed F Aleksander Barkov on injured reserve.
MINNESOTA WILD — Recalled F Hunter Haight from Iowa (AHL). Placed Fs Nico Sturm and Mats Zuccarello on injured reserve. Designated Fs Cameron Butler and Michael Milne and D Stevie Leskovar as injured, non-roster players.
NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Signed F Luke Glendening to a one-year, one-way contract.
SAN JOSE SHARKS — Placed D Jack Thompson and D Lucas Carlsson on the injured, non-roster list. Designated F Egor Afanasyev for non-roster, injured reserve.
VANCOUVER CANUCKS — Recalled D Victor Mancini from Abbotsford (AHL). Placed D Pierre-Olivier Joseph on injured reserve.
VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS — Placed D Jeremy Davies on waivers. Placed Fs Jordan Gustafson, Jakub Demek and Trevor Connelly on the injured, non-roster list.

AP SPORTLIGHT

Oct. 9

1974 — The Washington Capitals lose their first NHL game, 6-3 to the Rangers at New York's Madison Square Garden.
1988 — Oakland finishes a four-game sweep over the Boston Red Sox to win the AL pennant. Dennis Eckersley is named ALCS MVP after saving all four wins for the Athletics.
1991 — The San Jose Sharks get their first NHL win, beating the Calgary Flames 4-3.
2004 — Texas Tech beats Nebraska 70-10, the worst lost in the Cornhuskers' storied 114-year history.
2005 — Chris Burke hits a home run in the bottom of the 18th inning and Roger Clemens pitches three scoreless innings of relief in the Houston Astros' 7-6, series-ending victory over the Atlanta Braves in the NLDS. The longest postseason game in history takes 5 hours, 50 minutes.
2012 — Jerry Sandusky is sentenced to at least 30 years in prison in the child sexual abuse scandal that shamed Penn State and led to coach Joe Paterno's downfall.

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	20	7	6	66	57	33
Cincinnati	19	9	5	62	49	40
Inter Miami CF	17	7	8	59	72	53
Charlotte FC	18	13	2	56	53	46
NYC FC	17	11	5	56	49	42
Nashville	16	11	6	54	56	40
Orlando City	14	7	11	53	60	45
Chicago	15	11	7	52	66	58
Columbus	13	8	12	51	52	50
New York	12	14	7	43	47	44
New England	9	16	8	35	42	49
Toronto FC	5	13	14	29	33	40
CF Montréal	6	17	10	28	34	57
Atlanta	5	15	12	27	37	58
D.C. United	5	18	10	25	29	65

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
San Diego FC	18	9	6	60	60	41
Vancouver	17	6	9	60	63	35
Minn. United	16	7	10	58	55	37
LAFC	16	7	8	56	61	37
Seattle	13	9	10	49	55	47
Austin FC	12	12	8	44	35	43
Portland	11	11	11	44	41	44
FC Dallas	10	11	11	41	49	52
Real Salt Lake	12	16	4	40	36	46
Colorado	11	15	7	40	42	54
San Jose	10	15	8	38	58	62
Houston	9	15	9	36	43	56
St Louis City	8	18	7	31	42	56
Sporting KC	7	20	6	27	46	70
LA Galaxy	5	18	9	24	42	64

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Wednesday's game

Toronto FC at Los Angeles FC

Saturday's games

Atlanta at Miami
Vancouver at Orlando City
Real Salt Lake at Seattle
FC Dallas at LA Galaxy

Sunday's game

Los Angeles FC at Austin FC

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	19	2	2	59	45	11
Washington	12	4	7	43	39	28
Gotham FC	9	6	8	35	31	18
Portland	9	7	7	34	32	28
Seattle	9	7	7	34	28	26
Orlando	9	8	6	33	28	24
Louisville	9	9	5	32	31	35
San Diego	8	8	7	31	31	29
North Carolina	7	9	7	28	29	35
Houston	7	10	6	27	26	35
Angel City	6	11	6	24	28	37
Utah Royals FC	5	11	7	22	24	37
Bay FC	4	12	7	19	24	35
Chicago	2	11	10	16	28	46

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Friday's games

Chicago at Louisville
Portland at Orlando
Bay FC at Seattle

Saturday's games

Gotham FC at Kansas City
Washington at North Carolina
San Diego at Utah Royals FC

Sunday's game

Houston at Angel City

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Schedule

Wednesday
SOUTH

Missouri St. (2-3) at Middle Tenn. (1-4)

SOUTHWEST

Liberty (1-4) at UTEP (1-4)

Thursday
SOUTH

La. Tech (4-1) at Kennesaw St. (3-2)
East Carolina (3-2) at Tulane (4-1)
Southern Miss. (3-2) at Georgia Southern (2-3)

SOUTHWEST

Jacksonville St. (2-3) at Sam Houston St. (0-5)

Friday
EAST

Marist (3-2) at Penn (2-1)
Brown (2-1) at Bryant (2-4)
Cornell (0-3) at Harvard (3-0)

SOUTHWEST

South Florida (4-1) at North Texas (5-0)

FAR WEST

Rutgers (3-2) at Washington (4-1)
Fresno St. (5-1) at Colorado St. (1-4)



PAUL SANCYA/AP

The Cincinnati Bengals acquired quarterback Joe Flacco and a sixth-round draft pick from the Cleveland Browns for a fifth-round pick.

BRIEFS

Bengals get Flacco, could start at QB

Associated Press

Joe Flacco is on the move again.

The Cincinnati Bengals (2-3) acquired the veteran quarterback from the Cleveland Browns along with a 2026 sixth-round draft pick on Tuesday for a fifth-round pick next season.

The 40-year-old Flacco gives Cincinnati another option. Jake Browning has struggled since replacing Joe Burrow, who is out with a toe injury sustained in Week 2.

Flacco started the first four games for Cleveland (1-4) this season, completing 93 of 160 passes for 815 yards and two touchdowns with six interceptions.

"Joe is an experienced quarterback with a history of winning," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said. "He is a leader with a skill set that will fit our personnel well. He is a gifted passer with a strong arm, and we are excited to have him on our team."

Rookie Dillon Gabriel replaced Flacco in the starting lineup and played well in the Browns' 21-17 loss to the Minnesota Vikings in London. Rookie Shedeur Sanders now moves up to the backup spot.

If Flacco starts against the Green Bay Packers this week, he will become the seventh QB since at least 1950 to start against the same opponent twice in a season with a different team. Kyle Orton did it twice.

Cincinnati released Brett Rypien after the trade.

Flacco has thrown for 46,512 yards, 259 TDs and 168 INTs in 18 seasons. He is 10-6 in the playoffs with 3530 yards passing, 26 TDs and 12 INTs.

Giants' Dart will play through injury vs. Eagles

Jaxson Dart has been playing through a hamstring injury since making and winning his first NFL start late last month. He does not plan to let it keep him off the field.

The rookie quarterback brushed off any concern about the sore hamstring Tuesday and insisted he'll play for the New York Giants on Thursday night when they host the reigning Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles.

After being listed as a limited participant on the practice report Monday, Dart was estimated to be full go Tuesday, though the Giants did only what coach Brian Daboll calls a "jog-through."

Dart missed time Sept. 28 against the Los Angeles Chargers while being evaluated for a concussion, but played the entire game this past weekend at New Orleans.

Ravens trade Oweh to Chargers for Gilman

The Baltimore Ravens agreed to trade edge rusher Odafe Oweh to the Los Angeles Chargers for safety Alohi Gilman on Tuesday.

The teams said the move was pending physicals.

Baltimore also receives a fifth-round pick in next year's draft, with a 2027 seventh-rounder going to Los Angeles.

Oweh is in the final year of his rookie contract, and after producing a career-high 10 sacks last season, he has none through five games in 2025. Even with the Ravens' defense decimated by injuries, he played only 26 snaps in Sunday's 44-10 loss to Houston. Mike Green, a rookie in a similar role, played 42.

Still, the former first-round pick gives the Chargers another pass rusher to add to a defense that is tied for fifth in the league in sacks.

As poor as Baltimore's pass rush has been, the secondary might be in more trouble.

Safety Kyle Hamilton and cornerbacks Marlon Humphrey and Chidobe Awuzie missed last weekend's game with injuries, and safety Ar'Darius Washington tore an Achilles tendon in the offseason. That left the Ravens starting three rookies against the Texans.

NFL

Weekly statistics

AFC individual leaders

Quarterbacks

	Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int
D.Jones, Ind	150	107	1290	6	2
Maye, NE	153	113	1261	7	2
Mahomes, KC	183	116	1257	8	2
Herbert, LAC	178	117	1229	8	4
Allen, Buf	152	107	1217	9	2
G.Smith, Las	163	106	1176	6	9
Nix, Den	176	114	1103	8	4
Stroud, Hou	144	102	1076	8	3

Rushers

	Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Taylor, Ind	94	480	5.1	68	6
Cook, Buf	90	450	5.0	44t	5
Etienne, Jac	77	443	5.8	71	2
Dobbins, Den	77	402	5.2	41	4
Hall, NYJ	66	351	5.3	23	0
Jeanty, Las	82	349	4.3	64t	2
Judkins, Cle	72	347	4.8	38	2
Pollard, Ten	82	328	4.0	21	2
Henry, Bal	64	317	5.0	49	4
Hampton, LAC	66	314	4.8	54t	2

Receivers

	No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Wilson, NYJ	33	382	11.6	33t	4
Flowers, Bal	28	377	13.5	56	1
Johnston, LAC	26	377	14.5	60t	4
Chase, Cin	32	374	11.7	64t	3
Sutton, Den	26	365	14.0	52t	3
Diggs, NE	29	359	12.4	33	0
Collins, Hou	22	312	14.2	50t	3
Warren, Ind	23	307	13.3	41	1
Waddle, Mia	23	295	12.8	46t	3
Meyers, Las	25	290	11.6	45	0

Punters

	No	Yds	Lg	Avg
Rehkow, Cin	27	1433	70	53.1
Cole, Las	14	717	60	51.2

Scoring Touchdowns

	TD	Rush	Rec	Ret	Pts
Taylor, Ind	7	6	1	0	42
Cook, Buf	5	5	0	0	30

Kicking

	PAT	FG	LG	Pts
Shrader, Ind	14-14	13-14	52	53
Prater, Buf	15-15	10-11	52	45
C.Little, Jac	13-13	10-12	52	43

Kickoff Returners

	NO	Yds	AVG	LG	TD
Davis, NYJ	11	323	29.4	41	0
Codrington, Buf	9	261	29.0	41	0

NFC individual leaders

Quarterbacks

	Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int
Stafford, LAR	183	122	1503	11	2
Prescott, Dal	195	139	1356	10	3
Mayfield, TB	172	112	1283	10	1
Darnold, Sea	134	98	1246	9	3
Goff, Det	145	109	1187	12	2
Love, GB	121	84	1000	8	1
Rattler, NO	177	119	990	6	1
Murray, Ari	161	110	962	6	3

Rushers

	Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
J.Williams, Dal	79	447	5.7	66	5
K.Williams, LAR	82	368	4.5	20	1
Walker, Sea	68	330	4.9	31	3
Gibbs, Det	70	325	4.6	42	4
Mason, Min	69	323	4.7	24	3
Robinson, Atl	64	314	4.9	25	1
Montgomery, Det	61	310	5.1	72	4
Dowdle, Car	51	289	5.7	53	2
Crsky-Mrritt, Was	43	283	6.6	42	4
Kamara, NO	73	283	3.9	18t	1

Receivers

	No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Nacua, LAR	52	588	11.3	31	2
Smth-Njigba, Sea	34	534	15.7	53	2
Jefferson, Min	29	449	15.5	50	1
Egbuka, TB	25	445	17.8	77t	5
St. Brown, Det	35	407	11.6	34	6
McCaffrey, SF	39	387	9.9	29	3
Adams, LAR	22	357	16.2	44t	3
Pickens, Dal	23	357	15.5	43t	5
McMillan, Car	24	351	14.6	40	0
Pearsall, SF	20	327	16.4	45	0

Punters

	No	Yds	Lg	Avg
Mann, Phi	26	1364	70	52.5
Whelan, GB	14	725	65	51.8

Scoring Touchdowns

	TD	Rush	Rec	Ret	Pts
St. Brown, Det	6	0	6	0	36
J.Williams, Dal	6	5	1	0	36

Kicking

	PAT	FG	LG	Pts
McLaughlin, TB	11-12	12-15	65	47
Aubrey, Dal	15-16	10-10	64	45
Myers, Sea	17-17	9-12	56	44

Kickoff Returners

	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Young, Sea	8	275	34.4	60	0
McCaffrey, Was	12	377	31.4	58	0

AFC team statistics

Average per game

Offense

	Yards	Rush	Pass
Buffalo	395.8	154.4	241.4
Indianapolis	381.2	128.2	253.0
Kansas City	361.0	120.0	241.0
Denver	355.2	140.6	214.6
L.A. Chargers	352.2	116.8	235.4
Jacksonville	342.6	137.0	205.6
New England	336.6	95.2	241.4
Las Vegas	322.8	112.6	210.2
N.Y. Jets	319.4	144.4	175.0
Houston	314.4	116.2	198.2
Baltimore	311.8	115.6	196.2
Cleveland	288.2	95.8	192.4
Miami	278.6	82.2	196.4
Pittsburgh	263.5	80.0	183.5
Tennessee	233.8	85.2	148.6
Cincinnati	228.6	57.0	171.6

Defense

	Yards	Rush	Pass
Cleveland	247.8	75.6	172.2
Houston	265.8	90.6	175.2
Denver	288.6	88.4	200.2
L.A. Chargers	293.8	121.6	172.2
Buffalo	299.6	145.6	154.0
Kansas City	314.0	123.4	190.6
Indianapolis	315.0	98.0	217.0
New England	327.8	85.6	242.2
Las Vegas	328.2	101.4	226.8
N.Y. Jets	347.4	140.4	207.0
Jacksonville	348.2	97.8	250.4
Tennessee	366.8	146.8	220.0
Pittsburgh	382.5	122.0	260.5
Miami	386.6	174.2	212.4
Cincinnati	391.2	132.2	259.0
Baltimore	408.8	146.4	262.4

NFC team statistics

Average per game

Offense

	Yards	Rush	Pass
Dallas	406.6	134.4	272.2
L.A. Rams	401.8	112.2	289.6
San Francisco	375.8	85.2	290.6
Detroit	365.0	134.8	230.2
Atlanta	362.8	136.5	226.2
Seattle	358.4	113.0	245.4
Tampa Bay	353.8	110.4	243.4
Washington	349.0	156.4	192.6
Green Bay	347.2	114.5	232.8
Chicago	328.0	102.2	225.8
N.Y. Giants	320.6	117.0	203.6
Carolina	315.0	128.0	187.0
New Orleans	307.2	116.8	190.4
Minnesota	305.0	106.8	198.2
Arizona	288.4	118.2	170.2
Philadelphia	261.6	99.8	161.8

Defense

	Yards	Rush	Pass
Atlanta	244.0	109.0	135.0
Green Bay	283.2	77.5	205.8
Minnesota	289.8	132.2	157.6
Detroit	298.8	92.2	206.6
L.A. Rams	309.0	93.6	215.4
Tampa Bay	310.8	92.4	218.4
Carolina	311.6	107.2	204.4
San Francisco	315.6	108.0	207.6
Seattle	322.8	83.0	239.8
New Orleans	326.2	122.2	204.0
Philadelphia	338.2	126.8	211.4
Arizona	346.6	92.4	254.2
Washington	352.0	117.0	235.0
N.Y. Giants	377.2	140.0	237.2
Chicago	379.5	164.5	215.0
Dallas	412.0	127.4	284.6



MATT ROURKE/AP

Broncos quarterback Bo Nix, right, celebrates after a victory at Philadelphia on Sunday. Denver has another long trip this week as it heads to London to face the New York Jets.

TUESDAY TAKEAWAYS

Jaguars, Broncos, Pats still have a little to prove

BY ROB MAADI
Associated Press

The Jaguars, Broncos and Patriots had statement victories in Week 5. How they follow up will determine if they're ready to be real contenders.

Trevor Lawrence led Jacksonville to an incredible 31-28 comeback victory over Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs on Monday night, overcoming a few of his own miscues and saving his best for the last drive.

The Jaguars are 4-1 under coach Liam Coen, and they proved in front of a national audience that they can compete with any team.

Now comes a difficult matchup at home against Seattle. The Seahawks (3-2) lost to Tampa Bay on the final play in a game they could've won if not for a late interception.

It's a quick turnaround and short week for the Jaguars after an impressive win. Some teams can let down in these situations. Jacksonville can't afford to let up, especially with a trip to London to face the Rams coming up the following week.

Denver (3-2) went to Philadelphia on a short week of preparation after a lopsided win over the Bengals and stunned the reigning Super Bowl champion Eagles.

Down 17-3 in the fourth quarter, Bo Nix led the Broncos to a 21-17 comeback win and the defense stifled Saquon Barkley, Jalen Hurts and the rest of Philadelphia's inconsistent offense.

Now, they're heading to London to face the NFL's only winless team, the New York Jets.

It's another challenging travel week for the Broncos, who are tied with the Los Angeles Chargers in the AFC West. Sean Payton's team can't slip up against the woeful Jets, who have talent despite their 0-5 record.

Denver returns home to play four of its next five games at home before a bye in Week 12. The Broncos host the Giants and Cowboys, visit the Texans, and then host the Raiders and the Chiefs. They could be 8-2 going into a matchup against Kansas City if they take care of business and don't overlook any opponent. That starts with beating the Jets.

New England (3-2) went to Buffalo and shocked the Bills on Sunday night with Drake Maye leading a 23-20 victory. The Patriots made it clear that Josh Allen and the Bills aren't going to cruise to another AFC East title. They won't be pushed around anymore, not with coach Mike Vrabel standing on the sideline.

Maye has been impressive in his second season and certainly looks like the franchise quarterback the Patriots have sought since Tom Brady left.

But that win over the Bills can't be New England's Super Bowl. The Patriots have a favorable schedule the rest of the way. Only two of their remaining games are against teams that currently have a winning record — Buccaneers in Week 10 and Bills in Week 15.

The Patriots head to New Orleans (1-4) this week and Tennessee (1-4) next before returning home to face Cleveland (1-4). If they want to challenge Buffalo for the division, they must defeat inferior teams.

Adapting to change

Baker Mayfield is on his third offensive coordinator in three seasons with Tampa Bay and fifth in four years, including his stints with the Panthers and Rams in 2022.

He has improved each season and is playing at an MVP level. Dave Canales spent one year as the Buccaneers OC in 2023 and landed a head coaching job in Carolina. Coen replaced him, Mayfield had his best season and the Jaguars hired him to be head coach.

Josh Grizzard took over for Coen, Mayfield has elevated his game another notch and Tampa Bay's offense is averaging 27 points per game.

NHL

Title window open for motivated and talented Lightning

By Rob Maaddi
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — When a boat parade is the standard for an organization, anything less than hoisting the Stanley Cup is a disappointment.

The Tampa Bay Lightning haven't come close to those lofty expectations since falling two wins shy of a threepeat in 2022. They've been eliminated in the first round of the playoffs three consecutive years, the last two by the eventual champion Florida Panthers.

"You kinda use that as motivation throughout the whole summer," veteran defenseman Ryan McDonagh said. "You're angry that your season was cut short. We didn't accomplish our goal so you use that as motivation all summer to be as prepared as you can be and ready for a good start to the season and carry that through. They knocked us out and went on and finished the job, and that's what we're trying to do and get the job done."

The Lightning didn't make any splashy moves in the offseason after acquiring right wing Oliver Bjorkstrand and center Yanni Gourde at the trade deadline last season. Instead, they kept their core together, added depth players like forward Pontus Holmberg and bring back one of the most balanced lineups in the NHL.

Is their window to win another Cup closing? Not yet. It's still wide open with this group.

"At the end of last season, goals against, goals for, power play, (penalty kill), goal differential, 5-on-5 play, we checked a lot of boxes," general manager Julien BriseBois said. "We still went out and tried to do even better, tried to improve the roster at the deadline, tried to improve the roster this offseason. So you're always looking to improve your roster. I think what's exciting for us now is some of that growth might be internal. It might be organic. We have some young players that are going to be pushing to play a bigger role, I think, and it'll be exciting to see if they're able to do that and how quickly they'll be able to do that."

Nikita Kucherov, Brayden Point and Jake Guentzel are an elite top line. They lead an offense that averaged a league-best 3.6 goals per game.

Kucherov has won consecutive scoring titles and is aiming to become just the seventh player in NHL history to do it three years in a row. The 31-year-old Russian forward enters the season just six points away from 1,000 for his career.

He's more focused on improving the power play after a dismal 2-for-18 showing in the five-game series against the Panthers, who have turned into a bitter rival. In the regular season, Tampa Bay had the fifth-best power play with a 25.9% success rate.



Lynne Sladky/AP

Tampa Bay Lightning right wing Oliver Bjorkstrand, right, has scored 20 goals in six of the past seven seasons.

"I really took it personal," Kucherov said of the poor performance in the playoffs. "That's something that you hate to see and you're just hungry to go on the ice and work on things. You go out there and you work and hopefully find solutions."

The defense gave up the fourth-fewest goals at 2.6 per game. Andrei Vasilevskiy is one of the top netminders in the league and finished second for the Vezina Trophy. His 2.18 goals-against average last season was a career-best for the three-time All-Star and 2018-19 Vezina winner.

"We proved last year, especially in the regular season, how good we are," captain Victor Hedman said. "Getting bounced in the first round is not good enough, not up to our standard but I'm super excited about the team we have, the depth we have, the young guys we have."

The Lightning have scoring beyond the top line. Forward Brandon Hagel, who was acquired from the Chicago Blackhawks in March 2022 for two first-round picks and two players, scored 35 goals and had 90 points last season. He also spent time working out with Kucherov in the offseason.

Bjorkstrand and Gourde anchor the third line. Bjorkstrand has scored 20 goals in six of the last seven seasons. He's a key producer on the power play and has a powerful right-handed shot the team was missing without Steven Stamkos last season. Gourde is a three-time 20-goal scorer.

Tampa Bay has reached the playoffs in 11 of 12 seasons under coach Jon Cooper, including eight straight years. It plays in a difficult Atlantic Division that includes Florida and the Toronto Maple Leafs.

The Panthers finished third last season, didn't have home-ice advantage against the Lightning and went on to win the Cup for the second straight season. Tampa Bay knows that getting into the tournament is only the first step. The goal is to win 16 games in the postseason.

"There's no reason to not have a ton of confidence and a ton of belief in this group," McDonagh said.

Now, they just have to finish the job.

Future: Production could drop for Ovi, Caps without record chase

FROM PAGE 24

"He's already looking at 900 — like hopefully that happens (Wednesday) night," coach Spencer Carbery said before chuckling at the possibility of an opening-night hat trick.

That 900th goal could be the last big milestone for a while. Ovechkin already holds NHL records for power-play goals, 40-goal seasons and 30-goal seasons. Although his game has slowed in some respects, his ability to put the puck in the net remained elite last season, when he scored 44 goals in 65 games.

He became the second-oldest player to produce a 40-goal season. Gordie Howe scored 44 in 1968-69, the season after he turned 40.

"I'm 31 and it's hard," Capitals forward Tom Wilson said. "It takes a toll on the body. All of us, we just play as long as we can. He's the GOAT. He can just keep playing and scoring goals."



Nick Wass/AP

Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin, left center, talks with head coach Spencer Carbery during the second period of a preseason game against the Boston Bruins on Oct. 2 in Washington.

As consistent as Ovechkin has been, his production should not be taken for granted. In many ways, 2024-25 felt like a charmed season for both the Capitals and their Russian star. Washington rose all the way to the top of the Metropolitan Division, and Ovechkin scored on a career-high 18.6% of his shots.

There's plenty of chatter that both team and player might now regress, and with the record chase out of the way, it will be up to the Capitals to keep the intensity level high.

"I think the goal chase was good last year. It energized our team. I think it helped us get through the dog days a bit. It was such a cool moment for the whole organization," general manager Chris Patrick said. "But I think Alex has always been team first and I think the way he's handling this season just shows that he's a team-first guy."

Ovechkin already had to deal with an injury last month, although the severity was nothing like the broken leg he had in the middle of last season. Carbery said he has noticed no difference in his star's enthusiasm.

When Ovechkin is on one of his scoring binges, it sometimes feels like he could play until he's 50, but nobody is immune to the effects of age. Washington fans would be wise to savor this season, which could be their final chance to watch the greatest player in franchise history.

"It's pretty darn impressive, just his mentality and his physical perseverance to keep going and doing what he's doing, there's really no words to describe it," Wilson said. "I don't think anybody in that room will be talking about playing when they are 40, let alone scoring 44 goals and the broken leg and all that stuff last year. He's a machine."

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	1	1	0	0	2	3	2
Boston	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buffalo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Detroit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montreal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ottawa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tampa Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toronto	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Pittsburgh	1	1	0	0	2	3	0
Carolina	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N.Y. Rangers	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
N.Y. Islanders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Philadelphia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utah	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	1	1	0	0	2	4	1
Dallas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nashville	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chicago	1	0	1	0	0	2	3

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Anaheim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calgary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edmonton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Los Angeles	1	0	1	0	0	1	4
San Jose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seattle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vancouver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vegas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's games

Florida 3, Chicago 2
Pittsburgh 3, N.Y. Rangers 0
Colorado 4, Los Angeles 1

Wednesday's games

Montreal at Toronto
Boston at Washington
Calgary at Edmonton
Los Angeles at Vegas

Thursday's games

Chicago at Boston
Montreal at Detroit
N.Y. Islanders at Pittsburgh
N.Y. Rangers at Buffalo
Ottawa at Tampa Bay
Philadelphia at Florida
New Jersey at Carolina
Columbus at Nashville
Dallas at Winnipeg
Minnesota at St. Louis
Utah at Colorado
Anaheim at Seattle
Calgary at Vancouver
Vegas at San Jose

Friday's Games

No Games Scheduled

Saturday's games

Los Angeles at Winnipeg
St. Louis at Calgary
Buffalo at Boston
Philadelphia at Carolina
Montreal at Chicago
Toronto at Detroit
Ottawa at Florida
Washington at N.Y. Islanders
N.Y. Rangers at Pittsburgh
New Jersey at Tampa Bay
Columbus at Minnesota
Utah at Nashville
Dallas at Colorado
Vancouver at Edmonton
Vegas at Seattle
Anaheim at San Jose

Sunday's Games

Washington at N.Y. Rangers

Monday, Oct. 13

Colorado at Buffalo
Tampa Bay at Boston
Winnipeg at N.Y. Islanders
Nashville at Ottawa
Detroit at Toronto
New Jersey at Columbus
Florida at Philadelphia
St. Louis at Vancouver
Utak at Chicago

ROUNDUP

Boqvist scores winner for Panthers

Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Jesper Boqvist scored the go-ahead goal midway through the third period and the Florida Panthers, after raising their second straight Stanley Cup banner, opened defense of the title by beating the Chicago Blackhawks 3-2 on Tuesday night.

Mackie Samoskevich — getting his second assist, the fifth two-point game of his career — chipped the puck toward the goal and Boqvist knocked it out of the air for the lead with 10:20 left. A.J. Greer and Carter Verhaeghe also had goals for Florida, which got 17 saves from Sergei Bobrovsky.

Frank Nazar had a goal and an assist and Teuvo Teravainen also scored for Chicago. Former Panthers goalie Spencer Knight made 34 saves for the Blackhawks.

For the Panthers, it was the sort of grind-it-out win that might be necessary with star forwards Aleksander Barkov and Matthew Tkachuk out with injuries.

"That's what the year is," Panthers coach Paul Maurice said. "It's the building of that identity and the finding of it."

It was the official debut for new Blackhawks coach Jeff Blashill, who coached Detroit for seven seasons — 2015-16 through 2021-22 — and was hired by Chicago in May.

The Blackhawks won the Stanley Cup in 2015 and haven't made it past the first round of the playoffs since.

"This is what we love to do, and life goes by fast," Blashill said. "Let's make sure we're enjoying it."

Chicago scored first midway through the opening period on a breakaway from Nazar, but the Panthers — who outshot the Blackhawks 17-3 in the first 20 minutes — went into the first intermission up 2-1 after goals three minutes apart from Greer and Verhaeghe.



REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP

Panthers center Jesper Boqvist, left, celebrates with Aaron Ekblad after scoring the winning goal against the Chicago Blackhawks on Tuesday in Sunrise, Fla.

Teravainen scored early in the second to tie the game at 2-2, and it stayed that way until Boqvist delivered.

Penguins 3, Rangers 0: Justin Brazeau scored twice, Arturs Silovs stopped all 25 shots he faced for his first regular-season NHL shutout, and visiting Pittsburgh beat New York in each team's opener.

Dan Muse won his debut as Penguins coach with his predecessor, Mike Sullivan, on the other bench running his first game with the Rangers.

Sullivan guided Pittsburgh to back-to-back Stanley Cup titles in 2016 and '17 as part of a nearly decade-long run there before parting ways in April.

Brazeau and Silovs were also playing for the Penguins for the first time. Brazeau signed as a free agent, while Silovs joined in a trade from Vancouver.

Evgeni Malkin led off his 20th season in the league by setting up Brazeau's goal.

Malkin beat Vincent Trocheck on an offensive zone faceoff to get the puck to Brazeau, who was alone in front and roofed a backhander past Igor Shesterkin.

Avalanche 4, Kings 1: Martin Necas scored two goals, Nathan MacKinnon had two assists to become the leading scorer in Avalanche history, and Colorado opened the regular season with a road victory over Los Angeles.

Sam Malinski and Artturi Lehkonen also scored during Colorado's three-goal second period. Scott Wedgewood made 24 saves during a commanding performance by the Avalanche in their first game back from their disappointing first-round playoff exit to Dallas. Kevin Fiala scored a power-play goal with 4:53 left for the Kings, who matched the franchise records for victories and points last season before their fourth consecutive first-round playoff loss to the Edmonton Oilers.

20-year vets start together as Pens start new era

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Dan Muse was very intentional when he chose the Pittsburgh Penguins' starting lineup on opening night.

Their new coach made sure to get Ben Kindel and Harrison Brunicke out there for their NHL debuts. With them, he chose Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Kris Letang, who have been teammates for the past two decades and were making some history.

"We had three guys that have been playing together for 20 years, and I thought it was important that they get to start that game together," Muse said. "It kind of worked out well to be able to do that."

Just about everything worked out at the beginning of a new era for the Penguins, who got Muse a victory in his first game behind their bench by beating old coach Mike Sullivan and the New York Rangers 3-0 on Tuesday night.

Crosby, Malkin and Letang became the first trio in the four major North American men's professional sports leagues to play 20 seasons together with the same team. During that time, they've won the Stanley Cup three times.

"To be sharing 20 years with Geno and Tanger and having played this long together, it's so rare," Crosby said. "Just grateful that we can be in this situation, and we're still competing and still doing it."

Kindel and Brunicke at 18 and 19, respectively, hadn't even been born yet when Crosby, Malkin and Letang started their journey together. Crosby marveled at the age gap between him and his longtime running mates and a couple of fresh-faced players not even old enough to legally drink alcohol in the U.S.

His message to them was to enjoy the moment.

"It's been a while, but I still remember my first game and the emotions and it's always fun to see that and to be a part of that with other guys," Crosby said. "It was fun to be out there with them to start there. It makes you realize how long you've been around when you're standing next to some of these guys."

Muse was standing not far from what used to be his usual spot. He spent the previous two seasons as a Rangers assistant under Peter Laviolette, before taking over the Penguins when they parted ways with Sullivan.

Crosby felt Muse prepared the team well to get off to a good start. With a long season ahead, that's all they're considering this first win.

"We've got to enjoy it tonight, turn the page and back to work," Muse said.

"I'm really happy for the guys. ... You always want to start things off on the right foot."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Penn St. trying to recover from difficult losses



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Penn State defensive end Dani Dennis-Sutton runs past UCLA offensive lineman Courtland Ford on Saturday in Pasadena, Calif. The Nittany Lions' defense faltered against the Bruins, giving up 42 points.

BY TRAVIS JOHNSON
Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — The pain and anger was just beginning for Penn State players as handfuls of UCLA fans stormed the Rose Bowl to celebrate their Bruins' upset win Saturday.

The Nittany Lions, ranked second in the country just two weeks earlier, still had a nearly seven-hour flight home, where they'd have to relive their loss to previously winless UCLA in the film room.

"It's hard to look at," offensive lineman Drew Shelton said. "You honestly hate looking at a loss, but it's so important to be able to put it behind us."

Penn State players are still smarting as they prepare to face Northwestern (3-2, 1-1 Big Ten) on Saturday.

After losing their highly anticipated rematch of last season's Big Ten championship with No. 3 Oregon in front of a hyped-up "White Out" crowd, the Nittany Lions became the first top-10 team to fall to an 0-4 squad in 40 years when they lost 42-37 to the Bruins.

What was supposed to be a happy homecoming celebration this weekend for a team with national championship aspirations will now become a search for answers.

Safety Zakee Wheatley said he's not quite sure what to expect from the Beaver Stadium fans that in just 14 days went from reveling before ESPN's "College Gameday" to watching their team fall out of the AP Top 25 for the first time in three years.

Penn State came one game shy of playing for a national championship last year. Now, it knows its margin for error is almost nonexistent.

"We've just gotta be better overall," Wheatley said.

The Nittany Lions, who returned nearly every key contributor on offense save for star tight end Tyler Warren, rank 70th in total offense through five games. Coordinator Andy Kotelnicki's group started slow in the loss to Oregon, then never kept pace with a UCLA offense run for the first time by Jerry Neuheisel.

Meanwhile, Penn State is just 52nd nationally in rushing offense despite returning a veteran line and star running backs Kaytron Allen and Nicholas Singleton, who both looked ready to break the school's career rushing yardage record.

"I think a lot of it so far has just been some combination of four guys doing something right and one guy not holding up their end of the bargain," Shelton said. "We've got to make sure that we work every single day to make sure all five of us are on the same page and playing at the same level."

While the defense kept the Nittany Lions in the game against the Ducks, Jim Knowles' unit was shredded by the Bruins for 446 yards and 42 points.

It didn't help that Penn State was without stalwart linebacker Tony Rojas, who is expected to miss more time because of an unspecified injury.

"I've been places when times get tough the defense is pointing fingers at the offense or the offense is pointing fingers at the defense or special teams," coach James Franklin said. "We're not going to do that."

Mainly because the Nittany Lions still have a path to redemption, albeit very narrow.

Tennessee, Georgia, Arizona State and eventual champion Ohio State all made it to last season's College Football Playoffs with two losses. Clemson got in with three.

Notre Dame, the team that knocked Penn State out in the semifinals, lost to Northern Illinois in Week 2 last season.

The Fighting Irish won out from there until the Buckeyes beat them for the title.

After Northwestern, the Nittany Lions visit Iowa (3-2, 1-1). Penn State has a pair of top-10 opponents remaining: It visits No. 1 Ohio State on Nov. 1 and hosts No. 7 Indiana on Nov. 8.

"I get it," Franklin said. "We're not the only team that's in a similar situation like this. Like I mentioned before, there is examples as recent as last season, teams that have had tough losses and have been able to overcome it."

Freshman WR Wilson is 'specimen' floundering Florida needs

BY MARK LONG
Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Dallas Wilson's first collegiate play gained 9 yards — and included a fumble.

The Florida freshman coughed up the ball on the opening snap against Texas, losing control after getting walloped by Graceson Littleton. It could have dissuaded the newcomer. Instead, it made him more determined.

Wilson responded with the best debut for any freshman receiver in school history. He caught six passes for 111 yards and two touchdowns in a 29-21 upset of the then-No. 9 Longhorns, including a 55-yarder that could go down in Gators football lore.

"That was no surprise to me," cornerback Devin Moore said.

Added quarterback DJ Lagway: "He's a specimen, man."

Wilson might be the key to Florida coach Billy Napier turning around another season in Gainesville. The 6-foot-3, 213-pound Tampa native, one of Napier's top signings last December, expects to only get better with more experience.

"We've got a very electric offense," said Wilson. "As a team, I know what we can do. Knowing what you can do as a team is unbelievable."

The Gators (2-3, 1-1 Southeastern Conference) were one of college football's biggest disappointments in September, scoring 16, 10 and 7 points in consecutive losses. The offensive struggles had Napier, the team's primary play-caller, on the verge of getting fired in his fourth season.

Napier is now 21-22 at Florida, and there could be a push to keep him in place considering his best players are sophomore QB Lagway, sophomore linebacker Myles Graham, sophomore running back Jadan Baugh and arguably the best freshmen receiving duo in school history, Wilson and Vernell Brown III.

Napier's future will likely be decided over the next five games, which begin with a trip to No. 5 Texas A&M on Saturday. The Gators also host Mississippi State, play rival and 10th-ranked Georgia in nearby Jacksonville and then travel to Kentucky and No. 4 Mississippi in back-to-back weeks.



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Florida wide receiver Dallas Wilson celebrates making a touchdown against Texas on a 55-yard pass play on Saturday in Gainesville, Fla.

Adding Wilson to the mix should make a difference during the daunting stretch. He has already drawn comparisons to Ohio State star Jeremiah Smith, who caught 76 passes for 1,315 yards and 15 TDs as a freshman last season.

Wilson definitely took it up a notch after the fumble, which he scrambled to recover to avoid an early momentum shift.

Among his highlights: a leaping, toe-dragging catch for 18 yards near the sideline; a 13-yard score two plays later; and a physical, catch-and-run touchdown in the third quarter that covered more than half the field and gave the Gators a 15-point cushion.

It was the most impressive effort of Florida's season and the kind of eye-popping play that rarely has been seen in the Swamp since Tim Tebow and Percy Harvin dominated opponents regularly nearly two decades ago.

Wilson tossed aside cornerback Kobe Black at the line of scrimmage, spun out of the grasp of safety Jelani McDonald, tiptoed the sideline, ran through McDonald's second attempt at a tackle and then bulldozed safety Michael Taaffe at the goal line.

"He's got sneaky speed, but he's also a big body," Moore said. "Those 50/50 balls, they're more like 30/70 if you're not in a good position. A very versatile player and receiver."

Wilson has now set or tied five records in two outings. He had the most receptions (10) and tied for the most receiving yards (195) in the history of the Gators' spring game in April, and his receiving numbers against Texas were all debut marks for a freshman.

"The expectations, it wasn't really a big deal for me," Wilson said. "It's just a good belief. Everybody believed in everybody, so it was good coming out there with all the guys."

MLB PLAYOFFS

Mariners on brink of 1st ALCS since 2001 with win over Tigers

BY LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

DETROIT — The Seattle Mariners are on the brink of a spot in the AL Championship series for the first time in 24 years.

Cal Raleigh hit a two-run homer, Eugenio Suarez and J.P. Crawford had solo shots and Seattle beat the Detroit Tigers 8-4 on Tuesday night to take a 2-1 lead in the AL Division Series.

The Mariners are within a win of their first AL Championship Series since 2001. Their first chance to advance was Wednesday afternoon in Game 4 at Comerica Park and if necessary, another opportunity awaits Friday back in Seattle for a decisive Game 5.

"The Seattle Mariners deserve where we're at right now," Suarez said.

Detroit manager A.J. Hinch said not to count his team out after it showed resolve following a historic collapse in the regular season and bounced back by eliminating the Cleveland Guardians in an AL Wild Card series, then won Game 1 against the Mariners.

"We've had to play more and more back-against-the-wall-type games," Hinch said. "I know our guys are going to be ready."

Seattle's Logan Gilbert gave up one run on four hits while striking out seven and walking none over six innings.

"Can't say enough about what Logan did," Mariners manager Dan Wilson said. "Just an incredible outing. He had everything going."

Raleigh, who had a major league-high 60 homers during the regular season, hit a 391-foot, two-run homer to left-center in the ninth to make it 8-1.

The offensively challenged Tigers were limited to four hits and one run through eight innings before suddenly generating some offense in the ninth against Caleb Ferguson, who allowed three runs on three hits and a walk without getting an out.

Spencer Torkelson hit a two-run double and Andy Ibáñez followed with an RBI single.

All-Star closer Andres Munoz entered with one on and no outs and ended Detroit's comeback hopes with a flyout and game-ending double play.

The Tigers' Jack Flaherty lasted just 3⅓ innings, allowing four runs (three earned) on four hits and three walks.

Detroit RHP Casey Mize and Seattle RHP Bryce Miller were expected to start Game 4 on Wednesday.



PAUL SANCYA/AP

The Mariners' J.P. Crawford watches his solo home run during the sixth inning in Game 3 of an ALDS against the Tigers on Tuesday in Detroit. The homer was one of three for Seattle, which won 8-4.

Scoreboard

Division Series

Best-of-five
x-if necessary
American League
Toronto 2, New York 1

Toronto 10, New York 1
Toronto 13, New York 7
Tuesday: New York 9, Toronto 6
Wednesday: Toronto at New York
x-Friday: New York at Toronto

Seattle 2, Detroit 1

Detroit 3, Seattle 2, 11 innings
Seattle 3, Detroit 2
Tuesday: Seattle 8, Detroit 4
Wednesday: Seattle at Detroit
x-Friday: Detroit at Seattle

National League
Milwaukee 2, Chicago 0

Milwaukee 9, Chicago 3
Milwaukee 7, Chicago 3
Wednesday: Milwaukee at Chicago
x-Thursday: Milwaukee at Chicago
x-Saturday, Oct. 11: Chicago at Milwaukee

Los Angeles 2, Philadelphia 0

Los Angeles 5, Philadelphia 3
Los Angeles 4, Philadelphia 3
Wednesday: Philadelphia at Los Angeles
x-Thursday: Philadelphia (TBD) at Los Angeles (Glasnow 4-3)
x-Saturday: Los Angeles (Ohtani 1-1) at Philadelphia (TBD)



YUKI IWAMURA/AP

The Yankees' Aaron Judge celebrates with third base coach Luis Rojas after hitting a three-run home run against the Toronto Blue Jays during the fourth inning of Game 3 of an ALDS on Tuesday in New York.

Judge rallies Yankees past Jays to avert ALDS sweep

BY MIKE FITZPATRICK
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Aaron Judge hit a tying homer and drove in four runs during a clutch performance for the ages, and the New York Yankees staved off elimination by rallying from five runs down to defeat the Toronto Blue Jays 9-6 on Tuesday night in Game 3 of their AL Division Series.

Jazz Chisholm Jr. launched a go-ahead homer in the fifth inning and the Yankees took advantage of two Blue Jays errors to avoid a three-game sweep. They scored eight unanswered runs and pulled to 2-1 in the best-of-five series, with Game 4 on Wednesday night in the Bronx.

"We need another one tomorrow," manager Aaron Boone said. "We'll enjoy this for about 10 minutes and get ready for tomorrow."

Judge went 3 for 4 with an intentional walk and scored three times, also making critical plays with his glove and legs as fans chanted "MVP! MVP!" After struggling at the plate in previous postseasons, he is 7 for 11 in this series (.636) with five RBIs and three walks.

"Tonight was special, but there's still more work to be done," New York's captain said. "Hopefully we have some more cool moments like this the rest of the postseason."

With the season on the line, Yankees starter Carlos Rodón gave up six runs and six hits in 2⅓ innings — but five Yankees relievers bailed him out as they combined for 6⅔ scoreless innings. Tim Hill got four outs for the win, and David Bednar worked 1⅓ perfect innings for his second playoff save as New York improved to 3-0 in elimination games this postseason.

It was the Yankees' largest comeback ever in an elimination game, and tied for its second-biggest in any postseason game.

Toronto hadn't lost all season when leading by at least four runs.

"Kind of just didn't play our game, really," manager John Schneider said. "Their bullpen did a really good job, and we just gave them extra outs."

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit an early two-run homer and Ernie Clement had four hits for the AL East champion Blue Jays, who squandered a golden opportunity to put New York away as Toronto tries to reach its first American League Championship Series since 2016.

Consecutive doubles by Trent Grisham and Judge to start the third began the Yankees' comeback from a 6-1 deficit. Later in the inning, Judge stayed in a rundown between third base and home plate long enough to allow Cody Bellinger to reach third. That became important when Bellinger scored on Giancarlo Stanton's sacrifice fly against Blue Jays starter Shane Bieber, who lasted 2⅔ innings.

Stanton also had an RBI single in the first after Toronto second baseman Isiah Kiner-Falefa committed a fielding error against his former team.

With New York trailing 6-3 in the fourth, third baseman Addison Barger dropped Austin Wells' wind-blown popup for another costly error with one out. Grisham walked, and right-hander Louis Varland was brought in to face Judge, who turned on an 0-2 fastball clocked at 100 mph off the inside corner and somehow kept it fair, launching a three-run drive that clanged high off the left-field foul pole.

"He made a really good pitch look really bad," Varland said.

"It's an amazing swing," Boone said. "That's shades of Edgar Martínez right there, taking that high-and-tight one and keeping it fair down the line."

The right fielder then made a diving catch with a runner at second in the fifth, drawing more "MVP" chants.

Chisholm gave the Yankees their first lead of the series with a solo homer off Varland in the bottom half. Amed Rosario doubled and scored on Wells' two-out single to make it 8-6, and Ben Rice added a sacrifice fly in the sixth that scored Judge after he was intentionally walked with one out and nobody on base.

SPORTS

All rise

Judge's HR saves Yanks from sweep; M's take 2-1 lead vs. Tigers ›› MLB Playoffs, Page 23



NICK WASS/AP

Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin entered the season as the NHL's all-time scoring leader with 897 goals, and will likely become the first player with 900 early on.

NHL

Nearing the end

After huge milestones, Ovechkin's future hazy entering age 40 season

BY NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — When Alex Ovechkin was asked what he was most looking forward to on opening night this season, his answer was a subtle reminder that the 40-year-old version of the star forward is different than the player who entered the NHL two decades ago.

"Warmups," he said with a grin. "I hope my kids are going to make it for warmups."

Ovechkin began season No. 21 with the Washington Capitals on Wednesday night when they hosted the Boston Bruins. It's hard to imagine 2025-26 being more eventful than 2024-25, when he broke Wayne Gretzky's record and become the league's career leader in goals, but if last season was filled with anticipation — and ultimately celebration — this one may be more about appreciation.

It could be Ovechkin's last in the NHL. He is entering the final season of his contract and hasn't said whether he intends to retire — or even how soon he expects to make a decision.

"I just take day by day," he said Tuesday. "You have to have fun, you have to enjoy yourself, and try to do it best as you can."

After passing Gretzky with goal No. 895 late last season, Ovechkin entered 2025-26 with 897.

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Boqvist, Panthers begin three-peat quest with victory over Blackhawks
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Bengals get Flacco, hoping for QB upgrade ›› NFL, Page 18

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