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STARS AND STRIPES®

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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Vets come together in Texas flood aftermath

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

KERRVILLE, Texas — Fifteen minutes.

That was all the time it took for the water filling Kevin Jones' apartment in Ingram, Texas, to be waist deep the morning of July 4.

The retired Marine Corps gunnery sergeant had woken at about 4:30 a.m. after a restless night of thunderstorms to help his fiancé Ashlea Baldrige get ready for her opening shift at the Home Depot gardening center.

Their apartment, part of a small mixed-use shopping center near Ingram Dam, had been Jones' refuge after 20 years as an aircraft crew chief with three deployments to Iraq. It sat across the street from the Guadalupe River, where he loved to walk most days, feed the fish or paddle his kayak.

But in an instant, the tranquility of the waterway was gone. The river had become a destructive force and the couple had to ride out the worst of the flooding for two hours while hanging from the support beam of their apartment's front awning.

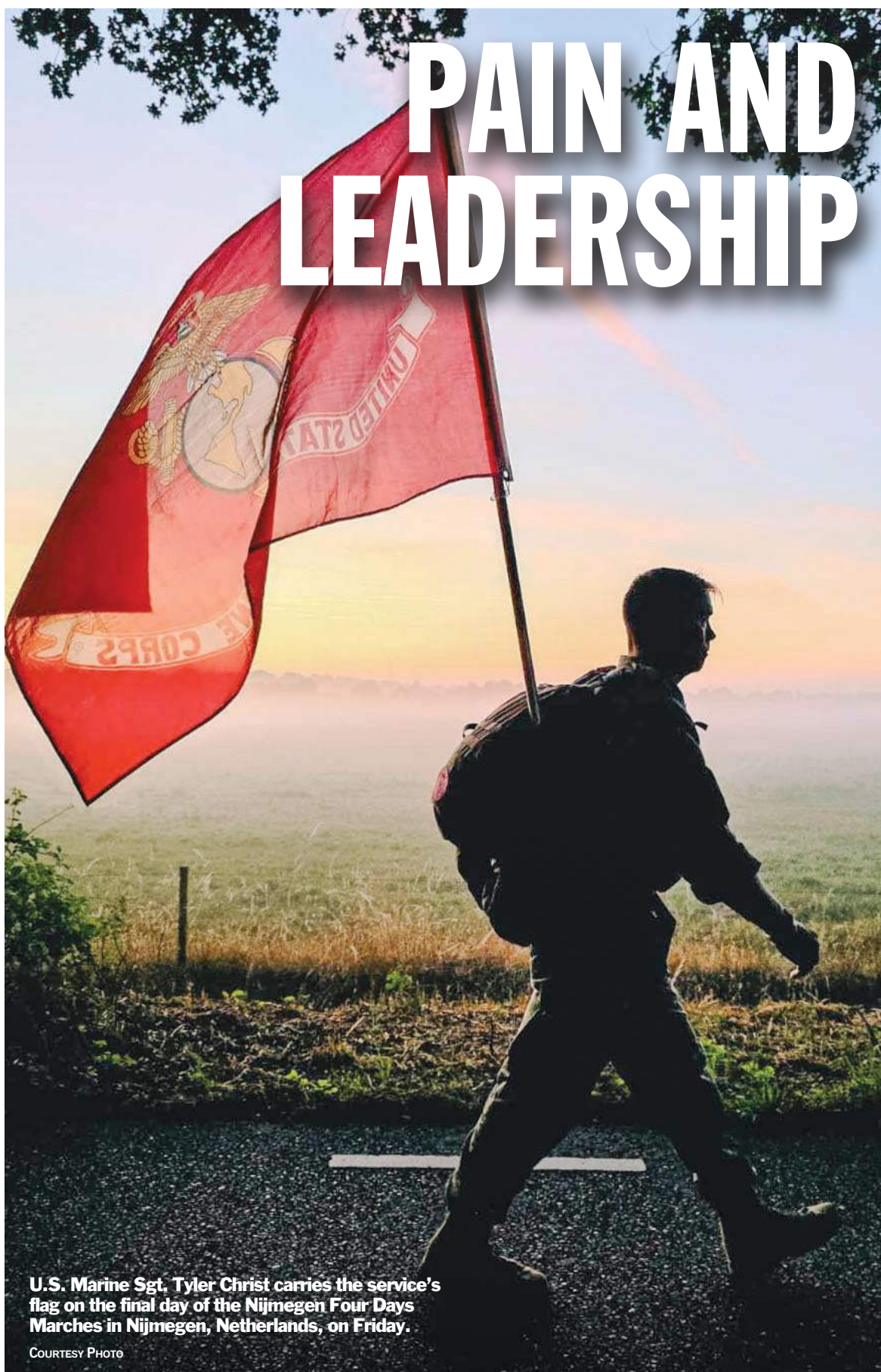
More than two weeks since that day, the couple is living in a hotel and consider themselves among

SEE FLOOD ON PAGE 6

"The water survival training I've been through in the Marine Corps... it paid off."

Kevin Jones
retired Marine Corps gunnery sergeant

PAIN AND LEADERSHIP



U.S. Marine Sgt. Tyler Christ carries the service's flag on the final day of the Nijmegen Four Days Marches in Nijmegen, Netherlands, on Friday.

COURTESY PHOTO

Service members around the world take on 100-mile Nijmegen march

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

NIJMEGEN, Netherlands — "You'll Never Walk Alone" is a song, a soccer anthem and a sentiment, glimpsed in passing recently on a roadside sign by service members marching 100 miles through the eastern part of this country.

The words captured the spirit of last week's Nijmegen march, which serves as a test of endurance, leadership and collective will.

Each morning, hours before sunrise, our international team of 17 service members laced up boots in a cramped bunk room at Camp Heumensoord, a few miles from the border with Germany.

Day One of "De 4 Daagse," or Four Days Marches, begins festively and grows more challenging as the first 25 miles tick by.

The event began in the Netherlands in 1909 with military roots, originally designed to simulate the long treks soldiers had to endure. Thousands of service members from around the world now join in, along with an estimated 40,000 ci-

SEE LEADERSHIP ON PAGE 7



LYDIA GORDON/Stars and Stripes

Army Maj. Samantha Turner hugs 1st Lt. Mercedes Fernandez after pinning on her medal for finishing the 100-mile-long march.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Over 5.2M pools under recall after deaths reported

Associated Press

NEW YORK — More than 5.2 million aboveground swimming pools sold across the U.S. and Canada over the last two decades are being recalled after nine drowning deaths were reported.

The recall covers a range of Bestway, Intex Recreation and Polygroup pools that were sold by major retailers as far back as 2002. According to Monday notices published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Health Canada, these pools have

compression straps running along the outside of the product — which “may create a foothold” for small children and allow them to access the water unattended.

That can pose a serious drowning risk, the safety regulatory warn. To date, the CPSC believes nine children across the U.S. have drowned after gaining access to these now-recalled pools in this way. Those deaths occurred between 2007 and 2022, involving children between the ages of 22 months and 3 years old. No addi-

tional fatalities have been reported in Canada.

Consumers in possession of these pools are urged to immediately contact Bestway, Intex and/or Polygroup to receive a free repair kit — which will consist of a rope to replace the compression strap. Owners of these pools should otherwise ensure that small children cannot access the pool without supervision, regulators note — and could alternatively drain the pool until the repair is made.

EXCHANGE RATES

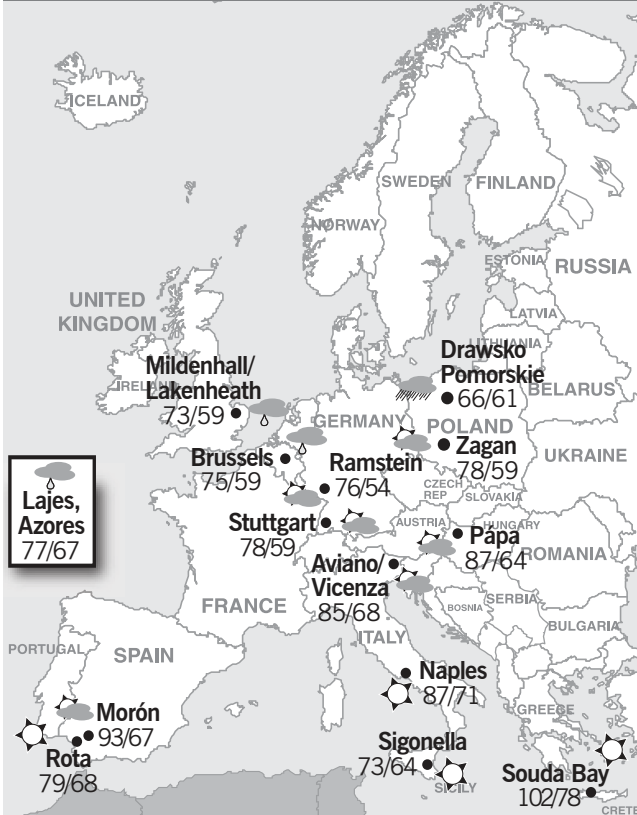
Military rates												
Euro costs (July 23)	0.83	Switzerland (Franc)	0.79633									
British pound (July 23)	\$1.31	Thailand (Baht)	32.203									
Japanese yen (July 23)	143.00	Turkey (NewLira)	40.42428									
South Korean won (July 23)	1350.00											
Commercial rates												
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.37446	(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 <table><tr><td>Prime rate</td><td>7.50</td></tr><tr><td>Interest Rates Discount rate</td><td>4.50</td></tr><tr><td>Federal funds market rate</td><td>4.38</td></tr><tr><td>3-month bill</td><td>4.34</td></tr><tr><td>30-year bond</td><td>4.99</td></tr></table>	Prime rate	7.50	Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50	Federal funds market rate	4.38	3-month bill	4.34	30-year bond	4.99
Prime rate	7.50											
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50											
Federal funds market rate	4.38											
3-month bill	4.34											
30-year bond	4.99											
Britain (Pound)	1.34846											
Canada (Dollar)	1.36672											
China (Yuan)	7.1755											
Denmark (Krone)	6.37831											
Egypt (Pound)	49.0825											
Euro	0.8544											
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8499											
Hungary (Forint)	340.885											
Israel (Shekel)	3.34993											
Japan (Yen)	146.526											
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.30472											
Norway (Krone)	10.14591											
Philippines (Peso)	56.902											
Poland (Zloty)	3.633359											
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.746996											
Singapore (Dollar)	1.28018											
South Korea (Won)	1384.20											

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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MILITARY



PHOTOS BY EMILY ROEMER/U.S. Army

Tech. Sgt. Keith Pascale of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Africa Warfare Center combat training school pilots a DJI Phantom 4 drone during an exercise near Miesau, Germany, on July 16.

Ramstein drone intrusion response drill engages US, Germany

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — U.S. military police and German authorities this month practiced taking down a small drone during drills near Ramstein Air Base, which has seen multiple airspace violations in the past year by unmanned aircraft.

U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa personnel on July 16 flew a DJI Phantom 4 drone over an Army installation near Miesau, where troops used signal disrupting technology to neutralize it, U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz said Tuesday in a statement.

“Our procedures are sound,” Staff Sgt. Michael Sopha of the 569th U.S. Forces Police Squadron said in the statement.

But he added that in the future, the capabilities of drones “will be far greater, supporting the need for alternative systems to combat them on a large scale.”

In December, Ramstein officials and German police confirmed that there had been a series of unauthorized drone flights over the base, which is the Air Force’s largest in Europe.

Weeks earlier, drones also were repeatedly spotted in the United Kingdom in the vicinity of RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall, RAF Fairford and RAF Feltwell.

The military never publicly identified who was responsible for the unauthorized flights.

However, German police statements at the time said the types of



Tech. Sgt. Matthew Stubblefield of the 569th U.S. Forces Police Squadron aims a handheld counter-drone device near Miesau, Germany, on July 16 during an exercise with German authorities.

drones that flew over Ramstein weren’t typical commercial hobby aircraft.

U.S. Army personnel and local police also participated in the training, according to the statement.

Civilian Emily Roemer, an anti-terrorism officer with the Rheinland-Pfalz garrison, said bringing service members and German law enforcement together was necessary to replicate the military response to any future drone incursion.

The proliferation of small drones has raised security concerns across Europe.

German military bases also have dealt with similar problems. In 2024, drones made repeated intrusions at a German army base near Berlin used for training Ukrainian troops.

“This is clearly organized and strongly points to Russia,” German parliamentarian Marcus Faber of the center-right Free Democratic Party told the German newspaper Bild at the time.

Marines ordered home from LA

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth directed 700 Marines sent to Los Angeles more than five weeks ago to help quell immigration protests to return to their California duty station, the Pentagon said Monday.

“Stability” has returned to the city, allowing for the Marines from Twentynine Palms, Calif., to leave the mission of protecting federal assets in the greater Los Angeles area, said Sean Parnell, Pentagon spokesman. The troops are part of the 3rd Battalion of the 7th Marine Regiment.

The departure of the Marines, who arrived June 9, leaves roughly 2,000 California National Guard members on federal orders in the city — about half of what was authorized by President Donald Trump in early June. All troops were authorized for up to 60 days.

Last week, Hegseth approved 2,000 National Guard members to leave the L.A. mission. Parnell also attributed that drawdown to im-

proved stability in the city.

Troops were deployed to L.A. on June 7 after thousands of people began to protest near a downtown federal building over immigration raids at businesses across the city.

Trump said that the troops were necessary to keep the city from burning but local officials argued the military inflamed the situation.

While the Marines have been primarily stationed as security outside of federal buildings, the National Guard troops have gone with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to provide a perimeter as officers arrested people.

Roughly 90 Guard members with Humvees on July 7 supported federal agents as they swept MacArthur Park in L.A. Another 300 were sent to assist in a raid of an illegal marijuana farm in Riverside County.

Earlier this month, the Defense Department approved 150 Guard members to leave Los Angeles and return to their jobs as part of a state wildfire prevention team.

Approval given for \$620M US arms sale to Bulgaria

By PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

Bulgaria has initial clearance to buy a \$620 million coastal protection system and related support from the U.S., part of a broader effort to reinforce NATO’s eastern flank against Russia.

The State Department signed off on the sale of the Naval Strike Missile Coastal Defense System following a request from the Bulgarian government, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a statement Monday.

The precision-strike, surface-to-surface system is designed to take out a range of sea targets from small ships to destroyers and frigates, according to Norway-based manufacturer Kongsberg Defence and Aerospace.

The system — whose missiles have a range exceeding 162 nautical miles, the company says — is expected to strengthen Bulgaria’s Black Sea coastline defenses.

The estimated cost includes training systems, inert and test missiles, spare parts, integration support and other services, the agency said.

Since 2022, Russia’s navy has been using cruise missiles, naval mines and sea-denial tactics in its ongoing war with Ukraine.

Those threats have at times ap-



COURTESY PHOTO/Kongsberg

A Naval Strike Missile Coastal Defense System munition is fired.

proached NATO members’ territorial waters, raising concerns about the security of shipping lanes and port infrastructure.

In response to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, NATO established the multinational Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group in Bulgaria, alongside similar units in Romania, Slovakia and Hungary later that year.

The Bulgarian group consists of about 1,650 troops, including Americans, who rotate roughly every six months.

Last year, Bulgaria met NATO’s old benchmark of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defense for the first time. In June, it joined other alliance members in endorsing a new goal to increase defense spending to 5% of GDP by 2035.

PACIFIC

US, Australian troops welcome locals amid drill

Talisman Sabre captures airfield and captures interest in the Outback

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

CLONCURRY, Australia — Australian troops and their U.S. Marine Corps guests will host an open house this week to give residents of this Outback mining and ranching town a closer look at the service members and their equipment.

Members of the 2,500-strong Marine Rotational Force-Darwin are training in Cloncurry, in northwest Queensland, as part of the biennial Talisman Sabre exercise. This year's drills, which began July 13 and run through Aug. 4, involve more than 35,000 personnel from 19 countries.

On Friday night, Australian soldiers, along with air traffic control and support Marines, captured Cloncurry Airport, which stood in for an enemy-held island base. More Marines arrived on Sunday to defend the facility.

The troops are preparing to host an open house at the airport on Thursday, rotational force spokesman Capt. Johnny Fischer told Stars and Stripes near the runway on Sunday as a crowd of locals watched from a parking lot.

The open house will give the community a chance to talk to Marines and view MV-22 Osprey aircraft, tactical vehicles and weapons systems, he said.

Talisman Sabre is a boost for the area and locals are excited about the open house, Cloncurry Mayor Greg Campbell said by email

Tuesday.

“Our central location between Darwin, Townsville, and the Gulf of Carpentaria (on Australia’s northern coast) makes Cloncurry a very strategic point, perfect for this exercise,” he said.

A rotational force member, Cpl. Allan Sanders — a former Beverly Hills security guard from Los Angeles — was part of a five-Marine team controlling air traffic into Cloncurry on Sunday.

The Marines arrived on Ospreys with Australian soldiers during the raid to capture the airfield from other Marines roleplaying as the enemy, he said.

The Marines and Australians have been trading patches and getting on well, Sanders said.

“They think we’re all hard chargers,” he said.

U.S. troops have a history in Cloncurry, 840 miles southeast of Darwin, on the northern Australia coast. Three squadrons of U.S. Army Air Force B-17 Flying Fortress bombers from the 19th Bombardment Group (Heavy) deployed here in the 1940s, according to an inscription on a plaque near the town’s library.

One American service member stationed there described the town as “a hot, dry place with a million flies per cubic foot of air,” according to the inscription.

The Marines’ visit is the talk of Cloncurry, a town that boasts at least four pubs where some of the



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Capt. Johnny Fischer and Cpl. Allan Sanders, both of Marine Rotational Force-Darwin, chat with a Cloncurry Airport worker during Talisman Sabre training in Queensland, Australia, on Sunday.



Locals watch U.S. Marines and Australian soldiers during Talisman Sabre training at Cloncurry Airport.

3,000-plus residents gather like thirsty kangaroos around billabongs in the evenings.

The Marines can expect a warm welcome from Bob Davis, a former Australian soldier and the proprietor of the Wagon Wheel Motel near the town center. The business was founded in 1876 as the Prince of Wales Hotel, he told Stars and Stripes on Saturday.

The Marines helped Davis in 2021 when he was a contractor providing fuel to the U.S. Embassy

in Kabul, Afghanistan, he recalled.

A Marine allowed the Australian to pass at Kabul International Airport’s Abbey Gate to reach an evacuation flight after the Taliban captured the city.

Ten days later, a suicide bomber attacked the gate, killing 11 U.S. Marines, a sailor, a soldier and 169 civilians.

“I owe the Marines,” the Australian said.

However, despite some peo-



A World War II memorial stands near the post office in Cloncurry, a town in Queensland, Australia, on Saturday.

ple’s concerns about Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific, Cloncurry doesn’t need a permanent American presence, Davis said.

“The best way to counter any threat is to have good trading relations with nations,” he added.

Air Force plans to deploy MQ-9 Reaper to S. Korea this year

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The U.S. military is planning to deploy the MQ-9 Reaper drone to an air base in South Korea for its first long-term rotation in the country, according to news reports Monday.

An unspecified number of Reapers will operate out of Kunsan, home of the 8th Fighter Wing about 115 miles south of Seoul, for three months starting later this year, unnamed military officials said in reports Monday by South Korea’s Chosun Daily and Yonhap

News.

A 7th Air Force spokeswoman declined Tuesday to confirm or elaborate on the reports, citing the command’s policy of not discussing “potential or planned operations.”

“Our focus remains on readiness while sustaining and strengthening our alliance with [South Korea],” Maj. Laura Hayden said.

The Reapers are U.S. military assets and South Korea’s military cannot confirm the details in the reports, Ministry of National Defense spokesman Jeon Ha Gyu

said Monday during a news conference in Seoul.

South Korea’s military does not possess the MQ-9; however, it operates four RQ-4B Global Hawks that it purchased from the U.S. for \$657 million in 2014.

The Reaper is a remotely piloted drone powered by a turboprop engine, according to its manufacturer, General Atomics. It can fly for 27 hours and reach a peak altitude of 50,000 feet.

While the \$56.5 million aircraft can perform reconnaissance missions, it can also be equipped with a 3,850-pound payload that in-

cludes AGM-114 Hellfire missiles or GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munitions, or JDAMs, according to the Air Force.

The long-range drone has previously flown over South Korea for large-scale, joint aerial exercises.

Air Force photos taken April 30 show California Air National Guardsmen loading a Hellfire missile onto a Reaper at Kunsan during Freedom Flag, a 12-day aerial exercise that began April 21.

Freedom Flag included approximately 90 aircraft from both countries, including South Korean air force FA-50s and U.S. Marine

Corps F-35Bs.

Reapers took part in air interdiction, defensive counter-air and combat search-and-rescue drills during the exercise, according to a 7th Air Force news release at the time.

An MQ-9 also took flight over South Korea during the Freedom Flag exercise in October.

During that drill, an MQ-9 dropped an inert JDAM using surveillance data from a South Korean air force RQ-4B at the Jikdo Island in the Yellow Sea, according to the 7th Air Force and Ministry of National Defense.

MILITARY

Work to begin on Guam command center

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

Construction of a command center for a missile defense system on Guam is scheduled to begin this month, another in a series of federal government expenditures for military infrastructure on the island.

Granite Construction Inc., of Watsonville, Calif., and Obayashi Corp., of Tokyo, secured a \$158 million contract for the work, which will “support future missile defense infrastructure to be installed under a separate contract,” according to a July 17 announcement from Granite.

Over the past two years, the same joint venture has obtained contracts for other defense-relat-

ed work on Guam worth another \$378 million.

Construction will include a command center and “associated power and security infrastructure to house command and control systems and personnel for the Guam Defense System,” said Missile Defense Agency spokesman Fred Hair.

The command center is a “key element” of the proposed Enhanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense System that aims to provide continuous 360-degree protection against cruise, ballistic and hypersonic missile attacks from regional adversaries, Hair told Stars and Stripes by email Monday.

“The Command Center will in-

clude functional areas to accommodate personnel, computing equipment, user interfaces and communications needed for planning, controlling and directing mission activities,” he wrote.

Construction is scheduled to begin late this month and conclude in July 2028, according to Granite’s announcement. The center is planned for a 120-acre site in Finegayan, just south of Marine Corps Camp Blaz, where the joint venture is working on a variety of other projects.

The defense system is planned to include radars, sensors, missile launchers, missile interceptors and support facilities at sites around Guam. Some elements could be in place next year, ac-

cording to the project’s Environmental Impact Statement in May 2023.

Army Lt. Gen. Robert Rasch, at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in May, estimated the project’s cost at \$8 billion.

The Defense Department has long pursued a missile defense system for Guam. The former head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, retired Adm. John Aquilino, described the system as the “top homeland defense priority” for his command, according to written testimony submitted during a March 2024 hearing of the House Armed Services Committee.

However, the project has also met resistance from locals and has

been criticized for its potential environmental impacts and lack of overall planning.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office said in a May 22 report that DOD “lacks a strategy that outlines how and when responsibilities for operating and sustaining” elements of the system will transfer to their lead organizations.

GAO also found that “DOD has not fully identified the required number of personnel or completed a deployment schedule.” Without such information, the department will likely face challenges in “ensuring adequate support infrastructure at installations in Guam for deployed personnel and their families.”

Naval school launches sustainable research buoy

By ANDREA VALADEZ
Monterey (Calif.) Daily Herald

MONTEREY, Calif. — Located about 3 miles offshore and 5 miles north of the Naval Postgraduate School is a first-of-its-kind ocean-sensing buoy. With 5G technologies and solar panels built in, the buoy has the capabilities to collect oceanographic and meteorological data 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the next three years.

NPS worked to develop and now lease the PowerBuoy from Ocean Power Technologies, a New Jersey-based company specializing in clean ocean-energy technology, and AT&T.

With the help of AT&T’s 5G technologies, the buoy will also serve to enhance communications at sea for the Navy and other mariners that come in contact with it. The buoy will remain in the ocean for three years, brought to the surface occasionally for upkeep.

“NPS has a long history of doing applied field experimentation ... we have naval officers, permanent defense service officers and international students and they’re all coming here for graduate education, all of it being somehow related to the problems they’re facing within the Defense Department,” said Kevin Smith, principal investigator and chair of the physics department at the school.



DANIEL LINEHAN/Naval Postgraduate School

As a maritime domain awareness technology demonstrator, the self-powered Ocean Power Technologies PowerBuoy will enable research into real-time tracking of vessels on and under the ocean for coastal monitoring relaying data via its AT&T 5G maritime base station.

“It’s really nice as both a graduate education institution and a Navy organization that we get to see the combination of the fundamental science and understanding of how things work, with seeing how that could apply and improve the effectiveness of our Department of Defense,” he said.

The school worked with the Na-

tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the California State Lands and Coastal Commissions and other organizations to ensure the buoy was properly permitted and wouldn’t cause a negative environmental impact.

Powered by solar and wind energy, the buoy will collect undersea and surface data and relay

that information to researchers at NPS through its 5G communication technology.

The 5G maritime base station can also provide internet access, high-speed data transmission and communication capabilities to vessels within a half-mile radius.

Part of the research looking forward will be to determine how far

5G can be extended inside of the maritime domain, according to Smith.

“We are excited to complete this installation and move into the lease phase of our contract with NPS,” said Philipp Stratmann, CEO of Ocean Power Technologies in a news release. “The collaboration with AT&T also demonstrates how PowerBuoys can serve as 5G communications nodes along the U.S. coastline.”

The buoy will help bring high-speed data to mariners who have been limited by VHF radio and satellite communication, which is more expensive than the 5G.

“At AT&T, we modernize network infrastructure to support the technologies of the future,” said Wes Anderson, public sector president in a news release.

“That’s why we’re proud to have launched a 5G cell site at sea with the Navy, Naval Postgraduate School and OPT. This collaboration fuels our commitment to developing 5G and edge computing solutions for manned and unmanned naval platforms that support national defense, homeland security and the maritime community,” he said.

Looking forward, the hope is that the buoy will transform the possibilities of what a maritime base station can look like.

3 Marine swimmers rescued about a mile off Okinawa’s northern coast

By BRIAN MCELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

Three U.S. Marines out for a swim Friday night spent more than an hour adrift off Okinawa’s northern coast before being rescued, according to the service and Japan’s coast guard.

The trio and another Marine were swimming for about an hour near Henoko fishing port when the fourth Marine reported the others missing to the Marine Corps at 7:27 p.m., according to a coast guard news release Friday.

Boat teams with the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion at nearby

Camp Schwab were dispatched to find the swimmers, who are assigned to the 3rd Marine Division, division spokesman 1st Lt. Joshua Figueredo said by email Tuesday.

They were found uninjured at 8:53 p.m. about a mile southeast of the port, according to a map released by the coast guard.

Weather conditions were cloudy, with 11 mph wind gusts and 3-foot waves, according to the release. The sun set 1½ hours prior.

One Marine was found on a rocky islet in the middle of the water; the others were picked up in open water, a coast guard spokesman said by phone Tuesday. None

were wearing life jackets, he added. Some Japanese government officials may speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

The Marines were assessed on the beach and taken to Naval Hospital Okinawa “out of precaution,” Figueredo said. The incident is under investigation.

MILITARY

Flood: Veterans volunteer to help victims, first responders

FROM PAGE 1

the lucky in Kerr County. In certain ways, the experience tested him more than war, Jones said.

“I’ve got my Marines to my left and right, and we’d get into skirmishes with the enemy. None of them ever lasted two hours,” he said.

The waters of the Guadalupe River reached historic levels that day, flooding dozens of children’s summer camps, homes and recreational vehicle resorts along its banks. More than 100 people died in the waters, including 37 children, and the search efforts continue for three people still missing, according to information released by Kerr County officials.

Like most people along the river’s edge, Jones and Baldrige had to make quick decisions to survive the flash flood.

By about 4:45 a.m., the front door to their apartment wouldn’t open because the water pressing against it was too great. Baldrige smashed a window, and they climbed into the water.

The couple grabbed onto the support beam and clung to it until the water receded and a rescue vehicle arrived. Two neighbors and a man who had been passing by on a motorcycle during the storm held onto other beams alongside them.

“It was splashing up against our chins and we were about almost as high as we could go before plan B kicked in. If it came up any higher, we were going to have to try and get on the roof,” Jones said.

They watched as vehicles floated by and industrial propane tanks released gas and exploded in the racing water.

“The water survival training I’ve been through in the Marine Corps, especially for aviation, it paid off,” Jones said. “I was calm as can be. When you start losing breath control, especially if you get swept away, that’s when you’re going to be in trouble.”

The couple were facing each other, maybe six inches apart. Jones kept kissing Baldrige on the forehead to reassure her that they would survive this. He wrapped his legs around her to hold her to the beam when her arms got too tired.

“He told me that it was going to be OK so many times that I finally just gave in and believed him,” Baldrige said.

Asking for help

In the days after July 4, Jones reached out to Team Rubicon, a veteran-led disaster recovery nonprofit organization, Jones had volunteered with since his retirement. But this time, he was the one in need of help. He’d lost his vehicles in the flood and needed help to clear his home and determine what could be salvaged.

“Now I’ve seen both sides of it.



Retired Gunnery Sgt. Kevin Jones speaks to Team Rubicon volunteers in his Ingram, Texas, home after the floods in Kerr County.



A truck and storm debris piled up against the mixed-used shopping center in Ingram, Texas, where retired Gunnery Sgt. Kevin Jones and his fiancé lived and rode out deadly floods.

Sometimes you’ve got to be humbled, and you have to ask for some help,” he said.

For more than a week, a daily average of about 30 to 40 Team Rubicon volunteers, known as “grey shirts,” have gone to locations where someone has asked for their help. They have helped a retired Navy officer clear mud and damaged property from inside his home. The veterans group has also been asked by the county to clear a 30-mile stretch of highway where debris and fallen trees have made it difficult for recovery teams to pass.

Last week, Team Rubicon members helped Jones rip his apartment down to the studs and clear a flooded storage unit that he had nearby. Inside, they found an American flag and three men stopped to ensure it was refolded properly.

A change of plans

Roberto Garcia, commander of the American Legion Kerrville Memorial Post 208, said the post is also ready to help the community for the months of recovery that lay ahead.

The Army veteran expected to spend July 4 marking Independence Day with a barbecue and a castle-shaped bounce house for members and their families at the post, which is on the town’s main drag along the banks of the Guadalupe River.

Instead, Garcia woke up early that morning to a call from Navy veteran Derek Stap, the post’s finance officer. The river had swollen into the post’s parking lot and things looked bad all over town.

“Get here quick,” Stap told Garcia.

As people began driving throughout town looking to give donations to someone willing to take items and offer help, Garcia decided they wouldn’t turn anyone or anything away. They knew they had lots of food and a dry building to offer support.

“We served our country because we want to help,” Garcia said. “Now we are out of that. We find other ways to serve. We might be disabled veterans, but we are not unable.”

Instead of a celebratory barbecue, the post fired up its massive pit to feed first responders and anyone in need. They have fed about 500 people a day on average for the past two weeks.

More than 1,000 local, state and federal responders remain in

town, as well as thousands of volunteers from across the country, according to Kerr County officials.

Teams are working along 100 river miles where the water is clogged with debris.

The land to right and left of the banks still bears remnants of what the flood deposited on the shore — window blinds stuck in twisted metal fencing, blankets and clothing clinging to the tops of trees and thick mud coating roads.

Other food vendors have since come to town to offer free meals and have set up in the American Legion parking lot, which sits next door to the Hill Country Youth Event Center that has served as a space for emergency operations and news conferences from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and President Donald Trump.

But the bounce house remained exactly where the rental company dropped it off the day before the storm.

Garcia never got to unfold it. It’s OK, though, he said.

By day, the post’s bingo hall has served as a site to distribute free snacks, supplies and toiletries to anyone in need. At night, it converts to a sleeping space for about a dozen people in town to help with recovery efforts. That number doubled and Garcia had to close the bar early to make room for more cots. The move will cost the post revenue, but it doesn’t matter, Garcia said.

“[The responders] are helping find our loved ones. We can’t turn them away,” he said.

Donors have already filled the immediate need of items such as sleeping cots, bug spray and cleaning supplies. Garcia already has nearly two shipping containers filled with them.

Now he’s gathering tools to help rebuild.

“It’s going to be months,” Garcia said. “These are items we need for the future. Not one week, two weeks. It’s going to be for the long run. It’s part of our core principles — patriotism and community.”

Jones and Baldrige are also planning for an uncertain future. A friend has loaned them a car and an RV to get them out of a hotel until they can find housing again. That could be the old apartment, but they don’t know yet.

The landscape has drastically changed. The lush hiking area across the river that they enjoyed is gone. The trees are now so sparse they can see a busy road that used to be hidden by the thick foliage. They also said they’re not certain they want to live ground-level with the river again.

“We’re day-to-day right now,” Baldrige said. “We’re just trying to get into what we’re calling phase two, to where we’re more involved in helping others than our recovery.”

EUROPE

Leadership: Participants push through pain to reach goal

FROM PAGE 1

vilians marching and tens of thousands more cheering on the participants.

Day Two is the toughest, Maj. Samantha Turner, an Army reservist and our team leader, warned us when we arrived. "After that, you just accept your fate," she said.

Fate dealt a lot of soreness, throbbing feet and tight muscles. Turner knew what she was talking about.

This was her attempt at completing her ninth Nijmegen March, which she called "the most fantastic leadership (event) that you can participate in."

A year earlier, illness had forced her to stop marching after the first day. She returned determined to finish what she started.

"I keep coming back because it's such an excellent way to test your mettle, your grit, your leadership," she said. "But also, how ... you inspire people to push through."

We stepped off into the dark on Day Two, cadences echoing from our multinational formation. Service members in our team from the U.S., Norway, Germany, Italy and Singapore marched past the oversized helmet and boots marking the camp's gate.

"Here we go again! Same old s--- again," echoed the now familiar call-and-response melody.

"Forty K and we'll be through," Turner called back, adjusting the lyrics with a smirk.

Since 1925, the city of Nijmegen has hosted the event's official start and finish.

Each day starts with miles of staggered global military formations trudging down a dirt trail and through sleeping neighborhoods before merging with the crowd of civilian walkers.

Supporters lined the route with signs, snacks and music. Children called out for patches, stickers and high-fives.

Our flag bearer, German army Master Sgt. Johannes Mannsee, jogged out of the formation and handed children stickers and patches.

Even as rain poured down on that second day, the three West Point cadets joining our formation stayed upbeat. Sienna Tepley, Maria Miroshnichenko and Ava Critcher pressed on with the same resolve as the veteran marchers beside them.

"The next military rest point is only 3 clicks ahead," Turner announced to the formation around Mile 16.

We had a time to beat, after all. Every military team was required to return to camp before 5 p.m., regardless of the start time.

But every painful step beyond that estimated distance felt like a mile. The only thing keeping me going was the thought of resting my feet, even if only for 10 or 20 minutes.

Yet when I looked around at the marchers beside me — military and civilian, many with their heads bowed, slowing and falling behind their groups — it reminded me we weren't alone in the struggle.

"I see that all the time ... where people get left behind (during) rucks (and) runs that we do," said 1st Lt. Mercedes Fernandez, of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. "Here they were supported and (our group) all finished together with 100%."

For Fernandez, it was a reminder of what leadership is supposed to look like.

"I definitely think that my leadership style has ... been reinforced and inspired," she added.



PHOTOS BY LYDIA GORDON/Stars and Stripes

Members of the International Friendship Team pose for a photo at the Field of Charlemagne in Nijmegen, Netherlands, on Friday, after all 17 members completed the 100-mile Nijmegen Four Days Marches, the largest multiday organized walk in the world.



Norwegian army Sgt. Anna Nordstrand, left, waves her country's flag while walking beside her father, Norwegian veteran Norman Havegaard, during the march.

Day 3, officially known as "the day of seven hills," loomed over us.

To keep spirits high, our team found small distractions, such as light-hearted bets on how many times we'd hear "Baila de Gasolina," a catchy hit by the Dutch band Effe Seriesus that played on speakers along the route.

The whole team cheered each time we added to the tally.

We couldn't quite decide if we genuinely liked the song or if it was becoming part of our collective insanity.

Every mile and hill came with challenges, but our formation never went silent. Someone was always calling cadence, cracking a joke or offering a word of encouragement to keep us moving.

Our team began mostly as a group of strangers. But by the final miles, we had lived together, walked together and endured pain side by side.

At the Field of Charlemagne, the milestone where all military teams receive their medals, I told Critcher the final words of a story, then looked around to see my team-



A Dutch man wearing a mummer costume supports walkers in Nijmegen on July 15.

mates exchanging hugs, high-fives and the occasional tear.

Sgt. Anna Nordstrand, a Norwegian army reservist, proudly waved her nation's flag as we entered the field. Her father, a veteran, walked close behind, beaming with pride at both his and his daughter's accomplishment.

Everyone hobbled into a loose circle as Turner stepped forward to hand out medals, one by one.

"Don't worry, I'll see you again next year," she whispered with a grin, pinning the medal to my chest before pulling me into a hug.

I laughed and replied, "ask me again in two weeks," hoping that by then I'd forget the pain in my limbs.

But deep down — after witnessing the strength, support and leadership that carried us through every mile — I knew I'd do it all again in a heartbeat.

NATION

Agency: Trump’s tax law will add \$3.4T to deficits

BY KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s tax and spending law will add \$3.4 trillion to federal deficits through 2034, the Congressional Budget Office reported Monday, a slight increase in the projection that takes into account the final tweaks that Republicans made before getting the legislation over the finish line.

More than 10 million people will be uninsured under the law in 2034 because of the law, CBO found, an improvement from an earlier projection that found 11.8 million people losing coverage over the decade.

The release of the CBO analysis Monday comes at the end of a grueling legislative fight, but at the start of a longer political struggle to come as the two parties clash over the law’s impact on the economy, health care and government programs.

Republicans are touting the bill as a tax cut for all Americans, yet a recent AP-NORC poll found about two-thirds of U.S. adults expect the new tax law will help the rich as Democrats attack the legislation.

The bill Trump signed into law on July 4 extended current tax rates for individuals that were set to expire at the end of this year and temporarily created new tax deductions for tips, overtime and auto interest loans for new vehicles assembled in the U.S. Republicans also used the bill to cut future spending on Medicaid and food as-

sistance, and to phase out certain clean energy tax credits more quickly.

Democrats were quick to highlight the CBO’s findings.

“Today’s report reminds us of something: facts are stubborn and the facts are clear,” said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer. “The big, ugly betrayal is a loser for the country and will be a loser for the Republicans.”

Republicans say the bill was critical to ensure most Americans didn’t experience a significant tax increase next year.

Trump and Republicans have also insisted that economic growth will exceed the CBO’s projections for the next decade, erasing the projected deficits as more revenue comes into the Treasury than anticipated.

Nonpartisan fiscal watchdogs also highlighted the CBO’s latest projection.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, said there will be a shorter-term “sugar high” as stimulus makes its way through the economy.

But modelers from across the ideological spectrum agree that any sustained economic changes are likely to be modestly beneficial, or negative.

“And not one serious estimate claims this bill will improve our fiscal situation,” MacGuineas said. “Rather, positive growth effects are likely to be swamped by the effects of higher debt and interest rates.”



Ross D. Franklin/AP
Construction workers frame up a roof of wood lumber at a new home build, April 1, in Laveen, Ariz.

Labor Department proposes over 60 rule changes for deregulation

BY CATHY BUSSEWITZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The U.S. Department of Labor is aiming to rewrite or repeal more than 60 “obsolete” workplace regulations, ranging from minimum wage requirements for home health care workers and people with disabilities to standards governing exposure to harmful substances.

If approved, the wide-ranging changes unveiled this month also would affect working conditions at construction sites and in mines, and limit the government’s ability to penalize employers if workers are injured or killed while engaging in inherently risky activities.

The Labor Department says the goal is to reduce costly, burdensome rules imposed under previous administrations, and to deliver on President Donald Trump’s commitment to restore American prosperity through deregulation.

Critics say the proposals would put workers at greater risk of harm, with women and members

of minority groups bearing a disproportionate impact.

“People are at very great risk of dying on the job already,” Rebecca Reindel, the AFL-CIO union’s occupational safety and health director, said.

“This is something that is only going to make the problem worse.”

Here’s a look at some of the rollbacks under consideration:

Home health care

Under one of the Labor Department’s proposals, an estimated 3.7 million workers employed by home care agencies could be paid below the federal minimum wage — currently \$7.25 per hour — and made ineligible for overtime pay if they aren’t covered by corresponding state laws.

The Labor Department says that by lowering labor and compliance costs, its revisions might expand the home care market and help keep frail individuals in their homes for longer.

Migrant farm workers

Last year, the Labor Department finalized rules that provided protections to migrant farm workers who held H-2A visas. The current administration says most of those rules placed unnecessary and costly requirements on employers.

Under the new proposal, the Labor Department would rescind a requirement for most employer-provided transportation to have seat belts.

The department is also proposing to reverse a 2024 rule that protected migrant farm workers from retaliation for filing a complaint, testifying or participating in an investigation, hearing or proceeding.

Limiting OSHA’s reach

The general duty clause allows OSHA to punish employers for unsafe working conditions when there’s no specific standard in place to cover a situation.

Trump intervenes to boost Hegseth aide who left military for politics

BY DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump will allow one of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s top advisers to sidestep legal requirements and retire from the military at a rank he held only briefly, apparently setting aside suspicions about the aide’s political loyalties raised in conservative media, officials familiar with the matter said.

The military retirement of Marine Corps Col. Ricky D. Buria became official this month, service officials said in an email. Absent any disciplinary action, he will be considered a colonel in perpetuity despite having served in the rank only since November 2024.

Federal law requires most mil-

itary officers with his standing to hold a rank for three years before they may retire with it, though there are exceptions that allow the president to intervene through a waiver in cases “involving extreme hardship or exceptional or unusual circumstances.”

Trump’s favor to Buria is not expected to increase his government pension, which will be calculated based on his pay over the top three years of his military career, one person familiar with the matter said, speaking like some others on the condition of anonymity because of a fear of reprisal.

Nevertheless, the waiver authorized by Trump allows Buria to retain his most recent military honorific, an important status symbol

for many who make a full career of their service.

It also marks a win of sorts for Hegseth, who has struggled to achieve cohesion among his inner circle of aides amid months of firings and voluntary exits that, along with his other missteps, have created the appearance of rampant dysfunction at the upper echelons of the Pentagon. The chaos has drawn unwanted scrutiny from lawmakers and, at times, key people close to the president.

The Pentagon, which previously declined to comment on whether Buria would receive a waiver, touted Buria’s military service in response to questions Monday.

“A grateful nation always thanks its veterans and active duty

service members,” said spokesman Joel Valdez.

The move completes Buria’s rapid transition from nonpartisan military aide to political foot soldier and Trump loyalist, a shift that has flabbergasted associates who worked with him during the Biden administration.

Buria, 43, a Marine pilot with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, is among the administration officials associated with “Signalgate,” a controversy arising from the accidental inclusion of a journalist in an unclassified group chat among senior Trump officials.

Buria, as an aide, helped Hegseth, a National Guard veteran and former Fox News personality,

get a special computer set up in his secure Pentagon office so the secretary could use Signal, people familiar with the matter said.

Buria submitted his retirement paperwork in April with hopes of becoming Hegseth’s next chief of staff, but the White House blocked him from taking that position, defense officials said. He has held the role on an acting basis instead.

Hegseth filled the senior military assistant role in April. Rather than return to his job as junior military assistant, Buria submitted a request to retire from the Marine Corps and turned in his uniform for a suit. Hegseth made him a senior adviser acting as the defense secretary’s chief of staff before he officially retired this month.

NATION

Trump, Philippine leader meet for trade talks

By DIDI TANG
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump welcomed Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Tuesday at the White House, as the two countries are seeking closer security and economic ties in the face of shifting geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region.

Marcos, who met Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Monday, is the first Southeast Asian leader to hold talks with Trump in his second term.

As the two leaders sat in the Oval Office in front of reporters on Tuesday, Trump said they would be talking about “war and peace” and trade.

“We’re very close to finishing a trade deal, big trade deal, actually,” Trump said.

Marcos spoke warmly of the relationship between their two nations and said, “This has evolved into as important a relationship as is possible to have.”

When asked by a reporter how he plans to balance his country’s relationships between the U.S. and China, Marcos said there was



President Donald Trump greets Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., upon arrival at the White House, Tuesday, in Washington.

ALEX BRANDON/AP

no need to balance “because our foreign policy is an independent one.”

“Our strongest partner has always been the United States,” he

said.

Marcos’ three-day visit shows the importance of the alliance between the treaty partners at a time when China is increasingly assert-

ive in the South China Sea, where Manila and Beijing have clashed over the hotly contested Scarborough Shoal.

Washington sees Beijing, the world’s No. 2 economy, as its biggest competitor, and consecutive presidential administrations have sought to shift U.S. military and economic focus to the Asia-Pacific in a bid to counter China. Trump, like others before him, has been distracted by efforts to broker peace in a range of conflicts, from Ukraine to Gaza.

Tariffs also are expected to be on the agenda. Trump has threatened to impose 20% tariffs on Filipino goods on Aug. 1 unless the two sides can strike a deal.

“I intend to convey to President Trump and his Cabinet officials that the Philippines is ready to negotiate a bilateral trade deal that will ensure strong, mutually beneficial and future-oriented collaborations that only the United States and the Philippines will be able to take advantage of,” Marcos said Sunday when he was departing for Washington, according to his office.

Manila is open to offering zero tariffs on some U.S. goods to strike

a deal with Trump, finance chief Ralph Recto told local journalists.

The White House said ahead of the meeting that Trump would discuss with Marcos the shared commitment to upholding a free, open, prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific.

Before a meeting with Marcos at the Pentagon, Hegseth reiterated America’s commitment to “achieving peace through strength” in the region.

“Our storied alliance has never been stronger or more essential than it is today, and together we remain committed to the mutual defense treaty,” Hegseth said Monday.

“And this pact extends to armed attacks on our armed forces, aircraft or public vessels, including our Coast Guard anywhere in the Pacific, including the South China Sea.”

Marcos, whose country is one of the oldest U.S. treaty allies in the Pacific region, told Hegseth that the assurance to come to each other’s mutual defense “continues to be the cornerstone of that relationship, especially when it comes to defense and security cooperation.”

DOJ wants to interview Epstein’s accomplice Maxwell

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Department of Justice wants to interview Jeffrey Epstein’s former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell, who was convicted of helping the financier sexually abuse underage girls and is now serving a lengthy prison sentence, a senior official said Tuesday.

If Maxwell “has information about anyone who has committed crimes against victims, the FBI and the DOJ will hear what she has to say,” Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said in a post on X. He added that President Donald Trump “has told us to release all credible evidence.”

A lawyer for Maxwell confirmed

there were discussions with the government.

The overture to attorneys for Maxwell, who in 2022 was sentenced to 20 years in prison, is part of an ongoing Justice Department effort to cast itself as transparent following fierce backlash from parts of Trump’s base over an earlier refusal to release additional records in the Epstein investigation.

As part of that effort, the Justice Department, acting at the direction of the Republican president, last week asked a judge to unseal grand jury transcripts from the case. That decision is ultimately up to the judge.

Two judges who will decide

whether to release the grand jury transcripts, Paul Engelmayer and Richard Berman, noted in nearly identical orders Tuesday that the records can be made public only under special circumstances, and they said the Justice Department hadn’t provided them with enough information.

Epstein, who killed himself in his New York jail cell in 2019 while awaiting trial, sexually abused children hundreds of times over more than a decade, exploiting vulnerable girls as young as 14, authorities say.

He couldn’t have done so without the help of Maxwell, his longtime companion, prosecutors say.

The Justice Department had said

in a two-page memo this month that it had not uncovered evidence to charge anyone else in connection with Epstein’s abuse.

Blanche said in his social media post that he anticipated meeting with Maxwell in the coming days.

Meanwhile, in Congress, House Speaker Mike Johnson is rebuffing pressure to act on the Epstein investigation, instead sending members home early for a month-long break.

Johnson, a Republican from Louisiana, said Tuesday morning that he wants to give the White House “space” to release the Epstein information on its own, despite a bipartisan push for legislation that would require more records to be released.



JOHN MINCHILLO / AP

Photo of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell used during a news conference in New York, 2020.

Trump escalates fight with Wall Street Journal over Epstein story

Associated Press

President Donald Trump on Monday followed up his lawsuit against The Wall Street Journal over last week’s Jeffrey Epstein story by banishing one of the newspaper’s reporters from Air Force One for an upcoming Scotland trip.

The moves reflect Trump’s aggressiveness toward media who displease him — even a media magnate, Rupert Murdoch, with outlets that have been friendly to him in the past.

Trump filed a \$10 billion defa-

mation lawsuit against the Journal and Murdoch on Friday because of the newspaper’s article about a sexually suggestive letter bearing Trump’s name that was included in a 2003 album compiled for alleged sex trafficker Epstein’s birthday. The president has denied having anything to do with it.

On Monday, the White House said it was removing a Journal reporter from the pool covering the president’s trip this weekend to his golf courses in Turnberry and Aberdeen in Scotland. The Journal’s Tarini Parti had been sched-

uled to cover him on the trip.

“Due to the Wall Street Journal’s fake and defamatory conduct, they will not be one of the thirteen outlets on board,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said.

The Journal declined to comment on the action.

It’s a tactic the Trump White House has used before. It restricted the access of journalists from The Associated Press to press events when the news outlet would not change its style guidelines to reflect Trump’s renaming

of the Gulf of Mexico. That launched a legal battle that is wending its way through the courts.

The defamation lawsuit is another tool Trump has used against media outlets. He has sued CBS News for its editing of a “60 Minutes” interview with former opponent Kamala Harris; ABC News for a false statement made by George Stephanopoulos in a story regarding a New York writer who had accused Trump of sexual abuse; and Meta after it removed Trump’s social media accounts

following the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

In each of those cases, Trump won multimillion-dollar settlements. But in those instances, news was only one part of a major corporation’s business.

In the case of Murdoch and News Corp., news is the chief part of his business. The Journal has vowed to fight.

It’s the first time Trump has sued for defamation as a sitting president, and it’s not clear whether any president has done that in the past.

NATION

Trump releases FBI records on MLK Jr.

By **BILL BARROW**
Associated Press

The Trump administration on Monday released records of the FBI's surveillance of Martin Luther King Jr., despite opposition from the slain Nobel laureate's family and the civil rights group that he led until his 1968 assassination.

The digital document dump includes more than 240,000 pages of records that had been under a court-imposed seal since 1977, when the FBI first gathered the records and turned them over to the National Archives and Records Administration.

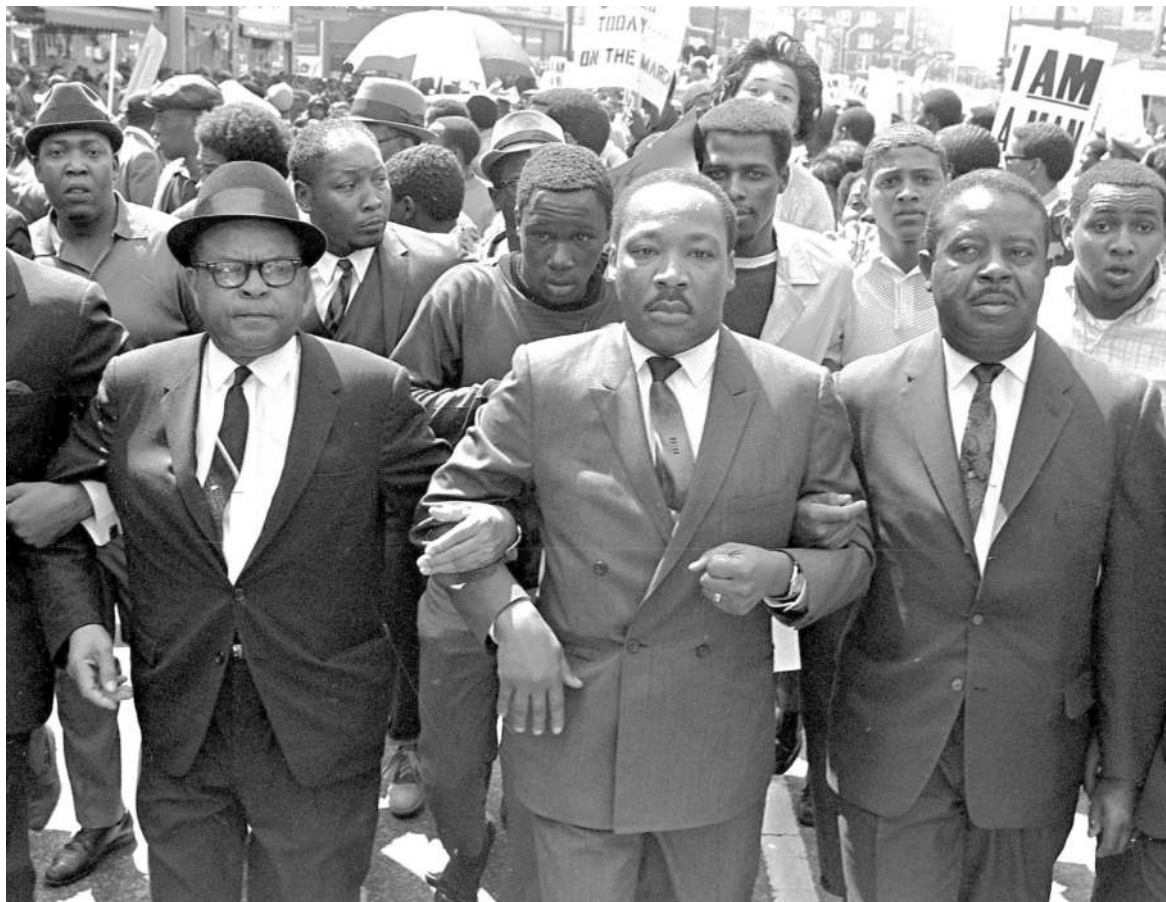
In a lengthy statement released Monday, King's two living children, Martin III, 67, and Bernice, 62, said their father's killing has been a "captivating public curiosity for decades." But the pair emphasized the personal nature of the matter and urged that the files "be viewed within their full historical context."

The Kings got advance access to the records and had their own teams reviewing them. Those efforts continued even as the government granted public access. Among the documents are leads the FBI received after King's assassination and details of the CIA's fixation on King's pivot to international anti-war and anti-poverty movements in the years before he was killed.

It was not immediately clear whether the documents shed new light on King's life, the Civil Rights Movement or his murder.

"As the children of Dr. King and Mrs. Coretta Scott King, his tragic death has been an intensely personal grief—a devastating loss for his wife, children and the granddaughter he never met—an absence our family has endured for over 57 years," they wrote. "We ask those who engage with the release of these files to do so with empathy, restraint and respect for our family's continuing grief."

They also repeated the family's long-held contention that James Earl Ray, the man convicted of as-



JACK THORNELL/AP

The Rev. Ralph Abernathy, right, and Bishop Julian Smith, left, flank Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during a civil rights march in Memphis, Tenn., on March 28, 1968. King was assassinated a few days later.

sassinating King, was not solely responsible, if at all.

Bernice King was 5 years old when her father was killed at the age of 39. Martin III was 10.

A statement from the office of Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard called the disclosure "unprecedented" and said many of the records had been digitized for the first time. She praised President Donald Trump for pushing the issue.

Trump promised as a candidate to release files related to President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination. When Trump took office in January, he signed an executive order to declassify the JFK records, along with those associated with Robert F. Kennedy's and MLK's 1968 assassinations.

The government unsealed the JFK records in March and dis-

closed some RFK files in April.

Besides fulfilling Trump's order, the latest release means another alternative headline for the president as he tries to mollify supporters angry over his administration's handling of records concerning the sex trafficking investigation of Jeffrey Epstein, who killed himself behind bars while awaiting trial in 2019, during Trump's first presidency. Trump last Friday ordered the Justice Department to release grand jury testimony but stopped short of unsealing the entire case file.

Bernice King and Martin Luther King III did not mention Trump in their statement Monday. But Bernice King later posted on her personal Instagram account a black-and-white photo of her father, looking annoyed, with the

caption "Now, do the Epstein files."

The King records were initially intended to be sealed until 2027, until Justice Department attorneys asked a federal judge to lift the sealing order early.

Scholars, history buffs and journalists have been preparing to study the documents for new information about his assassination on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which King co-founded in 1957 as the Civil Rights Movement blossomed, opposed the release. The group, along with King's family, argued that the FBI illegally surveilled King and other civil rights figures, hoping to discredit them and their movement.

It has long been established that then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoov-

er was intensely interested if not obsessed with King and others he considered radicals. FBI records released previously show how Hoover's bureau wiretapped King's telephone lines, bugged his hotel rooms and used informants to gather information, including evidence of King's extramarital affairs.

"He was relentlessly targeted by an invasive, predatory, and deeply disturbing disinformation and surveillance campaign orchestrated by J. Edgar Hoover through the Federal Bureau of Investigation," the King children said in their statement.

The Kings said they "support transparency and historical accountability" but "object to any attacks on our father's legacy or attempts to weaponize it to spread falsehoods."

Opposition to King intensified even after the Civil Rights Movement compelled Congress and President Lyndon B. Johnson to enact the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. After those victories, King turned his attention to economic justice and international peace. He criticized rapacious capitalism and the Vietnam War. King asserted that political rights alone were not enough to ensure a just society. Many establishment figures like Hoover viewed King as a communist threat.

King was assassinated as he was aiding striking sanitation workers in Memphis, part of his explicit turn toward economic justice.

Ray pleaded guilty to King's murder. Ray later renounced that plea and maintained his innocence until his death in 1998.

King family members and others have long questioned whether Ray acted alone, or if he was even involved. Coretta Scott King asked for the probe to be reopened, and in 1998, then-Attorney General Janet Reno ordered a new look. Reno's Justice Department said it "found nothing to disturb the 1969 judicial determination that James Earl Ray murdered Dr. King."

US says it will once again leave UN cultural agency

Associated Press

PARIS — The United States announced Tuesday it will again pull out of the U.N.'s educational, scientific and cultural agency because of what Washington sees as its anti-Israel bias, only two years after rejoining.

State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said the withdrawal was linked to UNESCO's perceived agenda to "advance divisive social and cultural causes." She added in a statement that UNESCO's decision "to admit the

'State of Palestine' as a Member State is highly problematic, contrary to U.S. policy and contributed to the proliferation of anti-Israel rhetoric within the organization."

This will be the third time that the United States has left UNESCO, which is based in Paris, and the second time during a Trump administration.

President Donald Trump had already pulled out during his first term and the United States returned in 2023 following a five-

year absence after the Biden administration applied to rejoin the organization.

The decision will take effect at the end of December 2026.

The decision will come as no surprise to UNESCO officials, who had anticipated such a move following the specific review ordered by the Trump administration earlier this year.

They also expected that Trump would pull out again since the return of the US in 2023 had been promoted by a political rival, for-

mer President Joe Biden.

The U.S. withdrawal is likely to affect UNESCO because the U.S. provides a notable share of the agency's budget.

But the organization should be able to cope.

UNESCO has diversified its funding sources in recent years, and the US contribution has decreased, representing only 8% of the agency's total budget.

The Trump administration in 2017 announced that the U.S. would withdraw from UNESCO,

citing anti-Israel bias. That decision took effect a year later. The U.S. and Israel stopped financing UNESCO after it voted to include Palestine as a member state in 2011.

The United States previously pulled out of UNESCO for the first time under the Reagan administration in 1984 because it viewed the agency as mismanaged, corrupt and used to advance the interests of the Soviet Union. It rejoined the agency in 2003 during George W. Bush's presidency.

NATION

San Francisco to ban RV living for homeless people

BY JANIE HAR
AND TERRY CHEA
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco is set to ban homeless people from living in RVs by adopting strict new parking limits the mayor says are necessary to keep sidewalks clear and prevent trash buildup.

The policy, up for final approval by San Francisco supervisors Tuesday, targets at least 400 recreational vehicles in the city of 800,000 people. The RVs serve as shelter for people who can't afford housing, including immigrant families with kids.

Those who live in them say they're a necessary option in an expensive city where affordable apartments are impossible to find. But Mayor Daniel Lurie and other supporters of the policy say motor

homes are not suitable for long-term living and the city has a duty to both provide shelter to those in need and clean up the streets.

"We absolutely want to serve those families, those who are in crisis across San Francisco," said Kunal Modi, who advises the mayor on health, homelessness and family services. "We feel the responsibility to help them get to a stable solution. And at the same time, we want to make sure that that stability is somewhere indoors and not exposed in the public roadway."

Critics of the plan, however, say that it's cruel to force people to give up their only home in exchange for a shot at traditional housing when there is not nearly enough units for all the people who need help; the mayor is only offering additional money to help 65 households.

Jennifer Friedenbach, execu-

tive director of the Coalition on Homelessness, says city officials are woefully behind on establishing details of an accompanying permit program, which will exempt RV residents from parking limits so long as they are working with homeless outreach staff to find housing.

"I think that there's going to be people who lose their RVs. I think there's going to be people who are able to get into shelter, but at the expense" of people with higher needs, like those sleeping on a sidewalk, she said.

San Francisco, like other U.S. cities, has seen an explosion in recent years of people living out of vehicles and RVs as the cost of living has risen. Banning oversized vehicles is part of Lurie's pledge to clean up San Francisco streets, and part of a growing trend to require



GODOFREDO A. VÁSQUEZ/AP

A man places belongings inside his RV, which is parked on Lake Merced Boulevard in San Francisco, on July 15.

homeless people to accept offers of shelter or risk arrest or tows.

The proposal sets a two-hour parking limit citywide for all RVs and oversized vehicles longer than 22 feet or higher than 7 feet, regardless of whether they are being used as housing.

Under the accompanying permit program, RV residents registered with the city as of May are exempt from the parking limits. In exchange, they must accept the

city's offer of temporary or longer-term housing, and get rid of their RV when it's time to move. The city has budgeted more than half a million dollars to buy RVs from residents at \$175 per foot.

The permits will last for six months. People in RVs who arrive after May will not be eligible for the permit program and must abide by the two-hour rule, which makes it impossible for a family in an RV to live within city limits.

Judge gives ex-officer nearly 3 years in Breonna Taylor raid

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A federal judge on Monday sentenced a former Kentucky police officer to nearly three years in prison for using excessive force during the deadly 2020 Breonna Taylor raid, rebuffing a U.S. Department of Justice recommendation of no prison time for the defendant.

Brett Hankison, who fired 10 shots during the raid but didn't hit anyone, was the only officer on the scene charged in the Black woman's death. He is the first person sentenced to prison in the case that rocked the city of Louisville and spawned weeks of street protests over police brutality that year.

U.S. District Judge Rebecca Grady Jennings, in sentencing Hankison, said no prison time "is not appropriate" and would minimize the jury's verdict from November. Jennings said she was "startled" there weren't more people injured in the raid from Hankison's blind shots.

She sentenced Hankison, 49, to 33 months in prison for a conviction of use of excessive force and three years of supervised probation after the prison term. He will not report directly to prison. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons will determine where and when he starts his sentence, Jennings said.

The judge, who presided over two of Hankison's trials, expressed disappointment with a sentencing recommendation by federal prosecutors last week, saying the Justice Department was treating



DYLAN T. LOVAN/AP

Attorney Ben Crump, left, stands beside Tamika Palmer, mother of Breonna Taylor, center, and Kenneth Walker, Taylor's boyfriend, outside the federal courthouse in Louisville, Ky., on Monday.

Hankison's actions as "an inconsequential crime" and said some of its arguments were "incongruous and inappropriate."

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who helped Taylor's family secure a \$12 million wrongful death settlement against the city of Louisville, had called the department's recommendation "an insult to the life of Breonna Taylor and a blatant betrayal of the jury's decision."

Crump was at Monday's hearing and said he had hoped for a longer sentence but was "grateful that (Hankison) is at least going to prison and has to think for those 3 years about Breonna Taylor and that her life mattered."

Afterward, before a crowd out-

side the courthouse, Crump sounded a familiar chant: "Say Her name." The crowd yelled back: "Breonna Taylor!" And he and other members of Taylor family's legal team issued a subsequent statement criticizing the Justice Department.

"While today's sentence is not what we had hoped for — nor does it fully reflect the severity of the harm caused — it is more than what the Department of Justice sought. That, in itself, is a statement," the statement said.

Hankison's 10 shots the night of the March 2020 botched drug raid flew through the walls of Taylor's apartment into a neighboring apartment, narrowly missing a neighboring family.

Planned Parenthood wins partial victory in legal fight with Trump administration

Associated Press

BOSTON — Planned Parenthood won a partial victory Monday in a legal fight with President Donald Trump's administration over efforts to defund the organization in his signature tax legislation.

A provision in that bill ends Medicaid payments for one year to abortion providers that received more than \$800,000 from Medicaid in 2023, even to those like Planned Parenthood that also offer things like contraception, pregnancy tests and STD testing.

But U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani in Boston granted a preliminary injunction Monday that, for now, blocks the government from cutting Medicaid payments to Planned Parenthood member organizations that either don't provide abortion care or didn't meet a threshold of at least \$800,000 in Medicaid reimbursements in a given year.

It wasn't immediately clear how many Planned Parenthood organizations and clinics would continue to get Medicaid reimbursements under that decision and how many might not.

Planned Parenthood said in a statement after the injunction that it's thankful the court recognized "the harm" caused by the bill. But it said it's disappointed that some of its members will lose this funding, "risking chaos, confusion, and harm for patients

who could now be turned away when seeking lifesaving reproductive health care."

"The court has not yet ruled on whether it will grant preliminary injunctive relief to other members," the statement added. "We remain hopeful that the court will grant this relief. There will be nothing short of a public health crisis if Planned Parenthood members are allowed to be 'defunded.'"

The lawsuit was filed earlier this month against Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. by Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its member organizations in Massachusetts and Utah.

Planned Parenthood argued that allowing the provision to take effect would have devastating consequences nationwide, including increased rates of undiagnosed and untreated sexually transmitted diseases and cancer.

"With no reason other than plain animus, the law will prevent Planned Parenthood Members from providing vital — indeed, lifesaving — care to more than one million patients," they wrote. "This statute is unconstitutional and will inflict irreparable harm on Planned Parenthood Members and their patients."

Lawyers for the government argued in court documents that the bill "stops federal subsidies for Big Abortion."

NATION

Beef prices have soared in the US

By JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Anyone firing up the grill this summer already knows hamburger patties and steaks are expensive, but the latest numbers show prices have climbed to record highs.

And experts say consumers shouldn't expect much relief soon.

The average price of a pound of ground beef rose to \$6.12 in June, up nearly 12% from a year ago, according to U.S. government data. The average price of all uncooked beef steaks rose 8% to \$11.49 per pound.

But this is not a recent phenomenon. Beef prices have been steadily rising over the past 20 years because the supply of cattle remains tight while beef remains popular.

In fact, the U.S. cattle herd has been steadily shrinking for decades. As of Jan. 1, the U.S. had 86.7 million cattle and calves, down 8% from the most recent peak in 2019. That is the lowest number of cattle since 1951, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Many factors including drought and cattle prices have contributed to that decline. And now the emergence of a pesky parasite in Mexico and the prospect of widespread tariffs may further reduce supply and raise prices.

The American beef industry has gotten better at breeding larger



NAM Y. HUH/AP

A price for beef is displayed at a grocery store in Mount Prospect, Ill., Thursday.

animals, so ranchers can provide the same amount of beef with fewer cattle, said David Anderson, a livestock economist at Texas A&M.

Then in 2020, a three-year drought began that dried out pastures and raised the cost of feed for cattle, according to the American Farm Bureau. Drought has continued to be a problem across the West since then, and the price of feed has put more pressure on ranchers who already operate on

slim profit margins.

In response, many farmers slaughtered more female cattle than usual, which helped beef supplies in the short term but lowered the size of future herds.

In recent years cattle prices have soared, so that now animals are selling for thousands of dollars apiece. Recent prices show cattle selling for more than \$230 per hundred pounds.

Those higher prices give ranchers more incentive to sell cows

now to capture profits instead of hanging onto them for breeding given that prices may decrease, Anderson said.

The emergence of a flesh-eating pest in cattle herds in Mexico has put extra pressure on supply because officials cut off all imports of cattle from south of the border last year. Some 4% of the cattle the U.S. feeds to slaughter for beef comes from Mexico.

The pest is the New World screwworm fly, and female flies lay eggs in wounds on warm-blooded animals. The larvae that hatch are unusual among flies for feeding on live flesh and fluids instead of dead material. American officials worry that if the fly reaches Texas, its flesh-eating maggots could cause large economic losses as they did decades ago before the U.S. eradicated the pest.

President Donald Trump's tariffs have yet to have a major impact on beef prices but they could be another factor that drives prices higher because the U.S. imports more than 4 billion pounds of beef every year.

Much of what is imported is lean beef trimmings that meatpackers mix with fattier beef produced in the U.S. to produce the varieties of ground beef that domestic consumers want. Much of that lean beef comes from Australia and New Zealand that have only seen a 10% tariff, but some of it comes

from Brazil where Trump has threatened tariffs as high as 50%.

If the tariffs remain in place long-term, meat processors will have to pay higher prices on imported lean beef. It wouldn't be easy for U.S. producers to replace because the country's system is geared toward producing fattier beef known for marbled steaks.

It's the height of grilling season and demand in the U.S. for beef remains strong, which agricultural economist Glynn Tonsor said will help keep prices higher.

If prices remain this high, shoppers will likely start to buy more hamburger meat and fewer steaks, but that doesn't appear to be happening broadly yet — and people also don't seem to be buying chicken or pork instead.

Nelson said that recently the drought has eased — allowing pasture conditions to improve — and grain prices are down thanks to the drop in export demand for corn because of the tariffs. Those factors, combined with the high cattle prices might persuade more ranchers to keep their cows and breed them.

Even if ranchers decided to raise more cattle to help replace those imports, it would take at least two years to breed and raise them. And it wouldn't be clear if that is happening until later this fall when ranchers typically make those decisions.

Engineer revives pay phones for areas with poor service

By AMANDA SWINHART
Associated Press

TUNBRIDGE, Vt. — An electrical engineer by trade, Patrick Schlott has spent countless hours tinkering with new and old technology. But it wasn't until he found himself living in rural Vermont that he realized his penchant for repairing old pay phones could provide a public service.

"I realized, wow, there's no cell service for 10 miles in either direction," he said. "The community could really benefit from something like this."

Schlott, a full-time engineer at electric airplane manufacturing company BETA Technologies, decided to approach the owners of his local general store with the idea to install old pay phones around town and make them free for public use.

After he explained that there would be no cost to the host, North Tunbridge General Store owners Mike and Lois Gross let Schlott install his first phone outside the store.

"Everyone's pretty surprised, and they're like, 'Is that a real payphone? Does that really work?' And I'm like, 'Yeah, but it doesn't

cost any money now,'" said store owner Mike Gross. "We've had people use it that broke down. It's a great thing because service is so spotty in Vermont."

The first free public phone installation was Schlott's idea, but he says the two other locations, the Latham Library in Thetford and inside an informational booth in Randolph off Interstate 89, came from community members requesting the service.

"All the other phones so far have been people reaching out, which is pretty cool," he said.

Schlott buys the old pay phones, which can range in cost from \$100-\$500, at flea markets, from internet listings or at auction and fixes them up in his basement workshop.

All that's needed to install one of his phones is an internet connection — no coins necessary.

"Basically, there's a small piece of equipment that converts an internet telephone line to an analog line that these phones can operate off of," he said.

Along with covering the costs, which are about \$2-\$3 a month for each phone line and less than \$5 a month for calls, Schlott acts as the



AMANDA SWINHART/AP

Patrick Schlott repairs an old payphone in his basement workshop on July 16 in Williamstown, Vt.

operator for each phone and can field or transfer calls, helping users when needed.

If a user dials zero, the phone will ring Schlott's personal cell-

phone, though he uses an app to keep his number private.

So far, the phone at the Latham Library location has seen the most use. According to Schlott, 370 calls

have been made since the phone was installed five months ago, filling a need for students without cellphones to call their parents for after-school pickups.

Hannah McClain is a regular at the North Tunbridge General Store and says she finds comfort in knowing the phone is there whenever her 16-year-old daughters might need it.

"It does make me feel safer if the kids are out and about, that if they had an emergency up this way that they could stop and use this. I think these are a great service," she said.

Schlott is seeing increased interest in the service, with another free phone install in the works at the Brownell Library in Essex. For now, he plans to continue covering the costs associated with each phone but noted that may change as the project scales.

"It's cool to see something retro that has that old-school appeal but also works. To actually hear it ring, to pick it up and have a dial tone, I think there's real power in that," he said. "And I don't think they should end up in a landfill. They should be recycled and put to good use."

NATION

Air Force: B-52 bomber crew was not warned about nearby airliner

Associated Press
BISMARCK, N.D. — Air traffic controllers at a small North Dakota airport didn't inform an Air Force bomber's crew that a commercial airliner was flying in the same area, the military said, shedding light on the nation's latest air safety scare.
A SkyWest pilot performed a sharp turn, startling passengers, to avoid colliding with the B-52 bomber that he said was in his flight path as he prepared to land Friday at Minot International Airport.
The bomber had been conducting a flyover at the North Dakota State Fair in Minot that was approved in consultation with the Federal Aviation Administration, the Minot International Airport air traffic control and the Minot Air Force Base's air traffic control team, the Air Force said in a state-

ment Monday.
As the bomber headed to the fairgrounds shortly before 8 p.m., the base's air traffic control advised its crew to contact the Minot airport's air traffic control.
"The B-52 crew contacted Minot International Airport tower and the tower provided instructions to continue 2 miles westbound after the flyover," the Air Force said. "The tower did not advise of the inbound commercial aircraft."
Video taken by a passenger on Delta Flight 3788, which departed from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and posted to social media captured audio of the SkyWest pilot explaining over the plane's intercom that he made the hard bank after spotting the bomber in the flight path that Minot air traffic control had directed him to take for landing.

"Sorry about the aggressive maneuver. It caught me by surprise," the pilot can be heard saying on the video. "This is not normal at all. I don't know why they didn't give us a heads up."
The FAA, Air Force and SkyWest are investigating.
It's just the latest flight scare in recent months. In February, a Southwest Airlines flight about to land at Chicago's Midway Airport was forced to climb back into the sky to avoid another aircraft crossing the runway. That followed the tragic midair collision of a passenger jet and an Army helicopter over Washington, D.C., in January that killed all 67 people aboard the two aircraft. Those and other recent incidents have raised questions about the FAA's oversight.
The FAA said Monday that a private company services the Minot air traffic control tower, and that



NORTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE/AP
A B-52 bomber from Minot Air Force Base conducts a flyover at the North Dakota State Fair on Friday in Minot, N.D.

the controllers there aren't FAA employees. It is one of 265 airport towers nationwide that are operated by companies, but the roughly 1,400 air traffic controllers at these smaller airports meet the same qualification and training requirements as FAA controllers at larger airports, the agency said.

A cane-sugar Coca-Cola is coming to US

Associated press
Coca-Cola said Tuesday it will add a cane-sugar version of its trademark cola to its U.S. lineup this fall, confirming a recent announcement by President Donald Trump.
Trump said in a social media post last week that Coca-Cola had agreed to use real cane sugar in its flagship product in the U.S., which has been sweetened with high fructose corn syrup since the 1980s. Coke didn't immediately confirm the change, but promised new offerings soon.
On Tuesday, Coca-Cola Chairman and CEO James Quincey said Coke will expand its product range "to reflect consumer interest in differentiated experiences."
"We appreciate the president's enthusiasm for our Coca-Cola brand," Quincey said in a conference call with investors Tuesday. "We are definitely looking to use the whole tool kit of available sweetening options."
Quincey noted that Coke uses cane sugar in some other U.S. drinks, like its Simply brand lemonade and Honest Tea. Coke has also sold Mexican Coke, which is made with cane sugar, in the U.S. since 2005.
"We're always looking for opportunities to innovate and see whether there's an intersection of new ideas and where consumer preferences are evolving," Quincey said. "It's a good sign that the industry, including ourselves, are trying lots of different things."
Rivals PepsiCo and Dr Pepper have been selling versions of their trademark colas sweetened with cane sugar in the U.S. since 2009.

Hunter Biden accuses Clooney of undermining his father

Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Former President Joe Biden's son Hunter isn't hiding his feelings about actor and Democratic Party donor George Clooney's decision to call on the elder Biden to abandon his 2024 reelection bid.
In a rare online interview, Hunter Biden used a string of expletives to describe Clooney when discussing the actor with Andrew Gallagher of Channel 5.
Clooney supported Democrat

Joe Biden's bid for a second term and even headlined a record-setting fundraiser for the then-president. But the actor changed his stance after Biden turned in a disastrous debate performance against Republican Donald Trump in June 2024 and added his voice to mounting calls for the then-81-year-old president to leave the race.
Clooney made his feelings known in an opinion piece in The New York Times. Biden ended up leaving the race a few weeks later

and endorsed his vice president, Kamala Harris. She lost to Trump.
In the lengthy and wide-ranging interview, Hunter Biden questioned why anyone should listen to Clooney and said the "Ocean's Eleven" actor had no right to "undermine" his father.
"What right do you have to step on a man who's given 52 years of his f—— life to the services of this country and decide that you, George Clooney, are going to take out basically a full page ad in the

f—— New York Times to undermine the president," Hunter Biden said before he trailed off to talk about how Republicans are more unified than Democrats.
Joe Biden served 36 years in the U.S. Senate and eight years as Barack Obama's vice president before he was elected president in 2020.
Los Angeles-based representatives for Clooney did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment Tuesday.

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WORLD

Zelenskyy renews offer to meet with Putin

By ILLIA NOVIKOV
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday renewed his offer to meet with Russia's Vladimir Putin and negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine, but hopes of progress were low as delegations prepared to hold another round of talks.

Russian forces, meanwhile, pounded four Ukrainian cities in nighttime attacks that officials said killed a child.

Putin has spurned Zelenskyy's previous offers of a face-to-face meeting to end Europe's biggest conflict since World War II. But the Ukrainian leader insists that lower-level delegations like the ones expected for talks in Istanbul on Wednesday don't have the political heft to stop the fighting.

"Ukraine never wanted this war, and it is Russia that must end the war that it itself started," Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry

Peskov said Tuesday that "a lot of work needs to be done before having a detailed discussion on a possibility of high-level meetings," effectively scrapping hopes of a summit any time soon. He didn't provide a date for the Istanbul talks.

Ukrainian and Western officials have accused the Kremlin of stalling in talks in order for its bigger army to capture more Ukrainian land. Russia currently holds about 20% of Ukraine.

Zelenskyy's announcement late Monday that the negotiations would take place generated little hope of progress. That is despite the Trump administration's efforts to push forward peace efforts, which have moved slowly because Putin is reluctant to budge from his demands.

Peskov said that "we have no reason to expect any magical breakthroughs, it's hardly possible in the current situation."

The previous two rounds were

held in Istanbul, and Russian media reports said that the Turkish city likely would also host the meeting this time. The talks in May and June led to a series of exchanges of prisoners of war and the bodies of fallen soldiers, but produced no other agreements.

Russia, meanwhile, is driving hard to break through at eastern and northeastern points on the 620-mile front line. It is also firing upwards of 700 drones a night at Ukrainian cities.

Zelenskyy said that at the next Istanbul talks, Ukraine wants to secure the release of more prisoners from Russian captivity and the return of children Ukraine says were abducted.

The Ukrainian delegation will be headed by former Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, who is now the secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine. It will include representatives of Ukrainian intelligence, the Foreign Affairs Ministry and

the president's office, Zelenskyy said.

Peskov said that "the issue of a Ukrainian settlement is so complex that even reaching agreements on prisoner exchanges or the return of bodies is already a success."

Russian forces struck four Ukrainian cities in three regions in overnight attacks, killing a child and wounding at least 41 other people, officials said.

From dusk on Monday evening, Russia struck the Ukrainian regions of Sumy in the northeast, Odesa in the south and eastern Kramatorsk.

In Kramatorsk, a glide bomb hit an apartment building, starting a fire, according to the head of the city's military administration, Oleksandr Honcharenko. A boy born in 2015 was killed, local officials said, without giving his exact age. Five other people were reported wounded.

The Sumy region came under

multiple waves of attacks, the regional military administration reported.

A drone hit a gas station in the town of Putyvl, wounding four people, including a 5-year-old boy, it said. A second drone strike hit the same location less than two hours later, wounding seven other people.

After dark, two powerful Russian glide bombs were dropped on Sumy city, wounding 13 people, including a 6-year-old boy.

According to regional authorities, five apartment buildings, two private homes and a shopping mall were damaged in the attack. The blasts shattered windows and destroyed balconies in residential buildings, acting Mayor Artem Kobzar said.

Russia's Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said Tuesday that air defenses downed 35 Ukrainian long-range drones over several regions overnight, including three over the Moscow region.

How this far-right party in Japan won many elections

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's far-right populist Sanseito party was one of the biggest winners in the weekend's upper house election, attracting many voters with its "Japanese First" platform that included calling for tougher restrictions on foreigners and the curtailment of gender equality and diversity policies.

Sanseito added 14 seats in Sunday's vote to the one seat already held by its leader in the 248-member upper house, the less powerful of Japan's two-chamber parliament.

The surge in the party's popularity came amid the backdrop of a historic loss by the long-governing conservative coalition of Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, with Sanseito attracting frustrated voters struggling with economic woes.

Kamiya said he is open to cooperating with other emerging parties, but he's expected to wait in the hopes of gaining more seats in the more powerful lower house. His ambition is to have more influence to possibly form a multiparty coalition like those in Europe.

Sanseito, which translates to "Participate in Politics," started in 2020 when Kamiya gathered people on YouTube and social media to create a political group to attract voters discontent with conventional parties.

The group began to grow as its members started winning seats in local assemblies, stepping up its presence and grassroots support base.

Sanseito achieved a foothold in national politics in 2022 when Ka-



Sohei Kamiya, leader of Sanseito party, speaks to the media Sunday following the upper house election in Tokyo.

miya won a six-year term in the upper house. The party won three seats in the October election in the lower house.

The party holds 15 seats in the upper house, compared with the 122 held by Ishiba's governing coalition, but Kamiya has been steadily reaching a much larger audience.

Sanseito has gained more than 100,000 YouTube subscribers over the past few weeks to nearly 500,000, compared to the the LDP's 140,000.

Sanseito party stood out from Japan's other parties, with a tough anti-foreigner stance as part of its "Japanese First" platform, apparently inspired by President Donald Trump's "America First" policy.

Under his slogan, Kamiya proposes a new agency to handle regulations on foreigners. During the election, the party campaigned for stricter screening for allowing Japanese citizenship and to exclude

non-Japanese from welfare benefits.

Critics say that the party's stance has encouraged the spread of xenophobic rhetoric in the election campaign and on social media, prompting other ultraconservative candidates to be outspoken. A typical claim is that a rapid increase in foreign workers has hurt Japanese workers' wages and that foreigners use a large share of welfare benefits and have made Japanese society unsafe.

That resonated with many Japanese, even though most foreign residents pay taxes and social security as required, and only account for about 3% of both Japan's total population and of welfare benefit recipients.

Kamiya's party attracted workers who feel frustrated and ignored by conventional parties.

Their advance is also part of a new move led by younger people connecting on social media with hopes of changing Japan's politi-

cal landscape, Izuru Makihara, a politics professor at the University of Tokyo, told a NHK television talk show. Sanseito is still inexperienced and its future success depends on whether its elected members can achieve policies, he said.

Kamiya, a former Self-Defense Force reservist and an assembly member in the western town of Suita, promotes an anti-vaccine and anti-globalism platform, while backpedaling on gender equality and sexual diversity. He has repeatedly talked favorably about Trump for taking bold measures.

During his campaign, he said that Trump's leadership is part of a growing anti-globalism movement in the West, and that "we share the same concern."

He also told a party leaders' debate that Trump policies are for protecting U.S. national interest and are good examples that Japan should follow. Kamiya is supportive of Trump's move to repeal decarbonization and diversity, equity and inclusion policies.

Kamiya, a fiery speaker, is also known for stirring controversy and has become a target of scrutiny as his party gained attention.

He has blamed the government's gender equality policies for triggering Japan's declining birth rate and population.

Kamiya, who opposes allowing a female-line emperor, was also criticized for suggesting that the imperial family would have to turn to concubines if the government was too slow in taking measures to ensure a stable succession.

Italy expands same-sex paternity entitlement

Associated Press

ROME — Italy's constitutional court has ruled that the non-biological mother in a same-sex union is entitled to paternity leave, equating her role with that of the father and therefore entitled to bonding time with a newborn.

The court found Monday that a 2001 decree on parental leave was unconstitutional because it didn't recognize that the non-biological mother in a lesbian civil union was also entitled to Italy's mandatory 10-day paternity leave.

The court argued that the child's interest in having time with both parents, and the parents responsibilities, didn't depend on their sexual orientation.

It's the second ruling in as many months hailed by LGBTQ+ activists amid efforts by the far-right-led government of Premier Giorgia Meloni to crack down on surrogacy and promote traditional family values.

In May, the constitutional court ruled that two women can register as parents of a child on a birth certificate, saying recognition of parental rights can't be restricted to the biological mother alone in families with same-sex parents.

Lawmaker Alessandro Zan, who has long pushed for greater LGBTQ+ rights in Italy, hailed the ruling as an historic end to an "unjust and cruel discrimination."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspect arrested after crashing into post office

CA SAN JOSE — The brother of late NFL star-turned-soldier Pat Tillman was arrested in connection with fiery car crash at a San Jose post office over the weekend, the family confirmed in a statement Monday.

Richard Tillman, 44, of San Jose was arrested after the car rammed into the office in a strip mall around 3 a.m. Sunday, causing the building to go up in flames, San Jose police said. No injuries were reported. The incident is being investigated as a “potentially intentional act,” U.S. Postal Inspector Michael Martel said in an email Monday.

About 50 firefighters took about an hour and a half to put out the fire at the Almaden Valley Station Post Office south of downtown. Photos posted online by the fire department showed a charred vehicle inside the heavily damaged one-story building.

Tillman was booked on suspicion of arson. He was held in lieu of \$60,000 bail.

Off-duty agent shot in botched robbery

NY NEW YORK — An off-duty U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer was shot in a Manhattan park on Saturday following an apparent robbery gone wrong, officials said. Two men have been arrested.

The 42-year-old officer is in stable condition expected to survive. There was no indication that he was targeted because of his employment, New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said.

The officer, who was not in uniform, had been sitting with a woman in a park beneath the George Washington Bridge when two men approached on a moped just before midnight. The passenger approached the officer, who realized he was being robbed and drew his service weapon, Tisch said.

The two exchanged gunfire and the officer was shot in the face and arm. The perpetrator was injured, police said.

Christhian Aybar Berroa, who authorities accused of being the driver, was apprehended Monday. Aybar Berroa has been arrested at least four times since his arrival in the U.S. in 2022, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

Police held Miguel Francisco Mora Nunez, 21, an undocumented immigrant with previous arrests, Sunday after arriving at a Bronx hospital with gunshot wounds to the groin and leg.

Ole Miss football player killed in shooting

TN MEMPHIS — Ole Miss freshman football player Corey Adams was killed in a shooting in Tennessee, the Shelby County Sheriff's Office announced Sunday.



GREG EANS, THE (OWENSBORO, KY.) MESSENGER-INQUIRER/AP

Learning the ropes

Owensboro firefighters Ian Wilson, foreground, and Andy Shively rappel down the outside of a tower at the Walter Freeman Fire Training Center during a rope training exercise Friday in Owensboro, Ky.

Adams was found with a gunshot wound inside a vehicle at an intersection in Cordova on the outskirts of Memphis late Saturday, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

Law enforcement officials have not named any suspects but said they are investigating the shooting as a homicide.

Adams, an 18-year-old New Orleans native, had been one of the top defensive linemen recruits in the country.

The football program at the University of Mississippi said in a social media post it was “devastated” to learn of Adams’ death.

Two killed, one missing after waterfall incident

OR BEND — Two people were killed and rescuers continued searching Monday for one more after a group of people were swept over a waterfall, authorities said.

The group went over Dillon Falls on the Deschutes River about 10 miles from Bend on Saturday afternoon, the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office said.

Three people were rescued from the river and taken by ambulance to a hospital in Bend. One person died at the scene, the sheriff's office said.

Detectives were working to determine how the group was swept over the falls and how those res-

cued were able to survive.

Online age verification law to go into effect

MS JACKSON — A Mississippi law that requires social media users to verify their ages can go into effect, a federal court has ruled. A tech industry group has pledged to continue challenging the law, arguing it infringes on users’ rights to privacy and free expression.

Parents — and even some teens — are growing increasingly concerned about the effects of social media use on young people. Supporters of the new laws have said they are needed to help curb the explosive use of social media among young people, and what researchers say is an associated increase in depression and anxiety.

Over 400 guinea pigs found at a home

CA LOS ANGELES — Animal rescue volunteers this week found more than 400 guinea pigs at a South Los Angeles home, living in “unsanitary and overcrowded” conditions.

Now they’re asking the public to help foster or adopt some of the rescued animals or to provide donations that will fund medical support and supplies.

Southern California Guinea Pig Rescue said volunteers found

hundreds of guinea pigs Thursday evening in what they described as a “distressing and alarming” scene. Some of the animals were dead. Others had medical problems including ringworm and open wounds.

The guinea pigs, some pregnant or newborns, didn’t have enough water or proper food.

Guinea pigs, which eat grass hay, vegetables and pellets, were living off of corn husks. A video showed guinea pigs scurrying around the residence, some hiding in beer boxes or crowded in a cage without food.

Four teens stabbed during a ‘pop-up’ rave

OR PORTLAND — Four teenagers including one later arrested as a suspect were stabbed during a “pop-up” rave party involving hundreds of people on a public esplanade in Portland, police said.

Police were called to a report of a stabbing at 3:19 a.m. Saturday and found the outdoor party underway at the Eastbank Esplanade, a recreational path along the Willamette River.

There were multiple fights at the scene and four people with stab wounds were taken to the hospital, police said.

Two had serious injuries and the other two required stitches or bandaging.

Among the injured was a 19-year-old Hillsboro, Ore., man who police identified as the suspect. He was jailed Saturday following his release from the hospital on three counts of felony assault and three weapons violations.

Father arrested in death of 9-year-old daughter

NY LATHAM — A Canadian man who reported his 9-year-old daughter missing in New York has been arrested after she was found dead, authorities said Monday.

Luciano Frattolin, the father of Melina Frattolin, was charged with second-degree murder and concealing of a corpse, New York State Police spokesman Robert McConnell said.

State Police said Luciano Frattolin reported the girl missing and possibly abducted on Saturday, leading officials to issue an Amber Alert to enlist the public’s help in finding her.

But authorities said over the weekend that there were inconsistencies in the father’s account, and that they concluded there was no evidence of an abduction.

Authorities found the girl’s body on Sunday north of Lake George village, near the state border with Vermont

But mostly, he's still punching.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18								19	20			
			21		22	23		24				
25	26	27			28		29			30	31	32
33				34						35		
36				37					38			
		39	40			41		42				
43	44				45			46		47	48	49
50					51	52	53					
54					55				56			
57					58				59			

- ACROSS
- 1 Crèche trio

5 "Wicked Women" author Weldon

8 Incite

12 Pressing need

13 Time line period

14 Burden

15 Sunbathing site

17 "Uh-uh"

18 Former U.N. leader Kofi

19 Mariners

21 Poet Ogden

24 Upper limb

25 Section

28 Henry VIII's Catherine

30 "I — Rock"

33 Id counterpart

34 Maestro Mehta

35 — chi

36 Romance

37 "Step —!"

38 Barking critter

39 Sawbuck

41 Ship wood

43 iPad, for one

46 Heroic sled dog

50 Hearty quaffs

51 Farm alarms

54 Swiss-born painter Paul

55 TV alien

56 Alike (Fr.)
- 57 Corn servings

58 However

59 QB Tony
- 25 Church seating

26 Previously

27 Ice cream float ingredient

29 Bar mitzvah, e.g.

31 Goat's plaint

32 Have a bug

34 Region

38 Rink athlete

40 Someone — (not mine)

42 Six-pack muscles

43 Seize

44 Penne — Vodka

45 Tea carrier

47 Toy block name

48 Streetcar

49 Ibsen's home

52 Yucatan "Bravo!"

53 Frequently

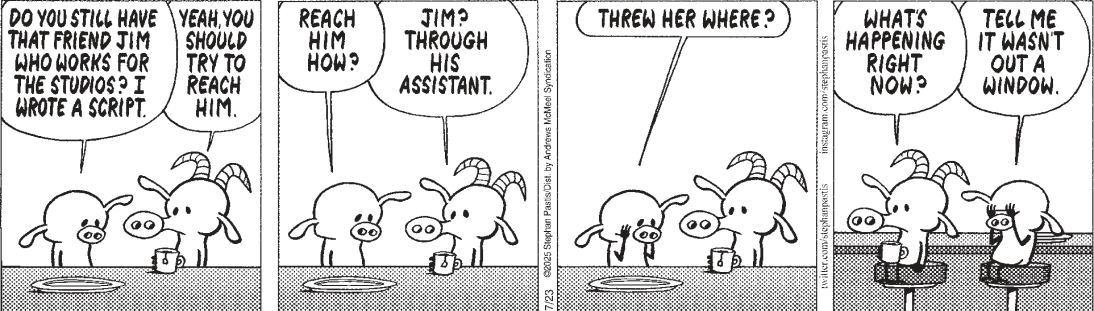
Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	L	A	S		E	L	K		E	T	N	A
D	E	M	I		T	I	E		L	E	O	N
A	G	E	G	R	O	U	P		A	M	E	N
			N	A	N		T	O	P	P	L	E
E	L	V	E	S		O	C	H	S			
T	O	O	T		S	T	O	N	E	A	G	E
T	N	T		M	E	T	O		W	A	G	
A	G	E	L	E	V	E	L		T	O	G	A
				U	S	E	R		M	I	L	A
B	U	R	S	A	R		F	E	D			
A	T	I	T		E	A	R	L	Y	A	G	E
N	I	C	E		L	A	O		U	B	E	R
S	L	E	D		Y	A	M		P	E	T	A

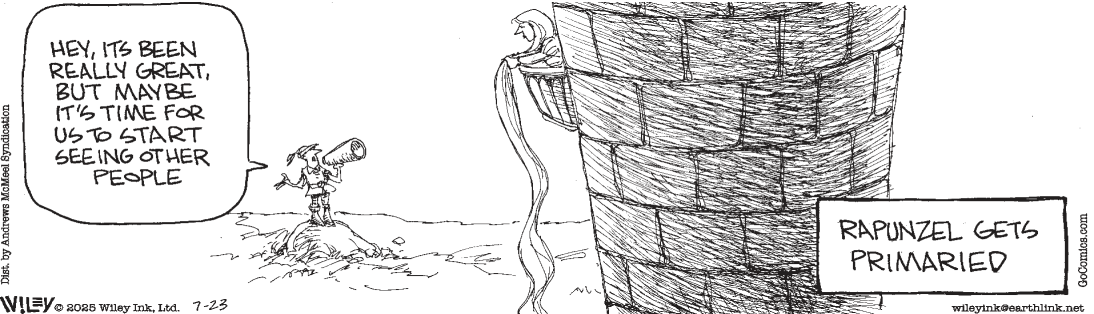
Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



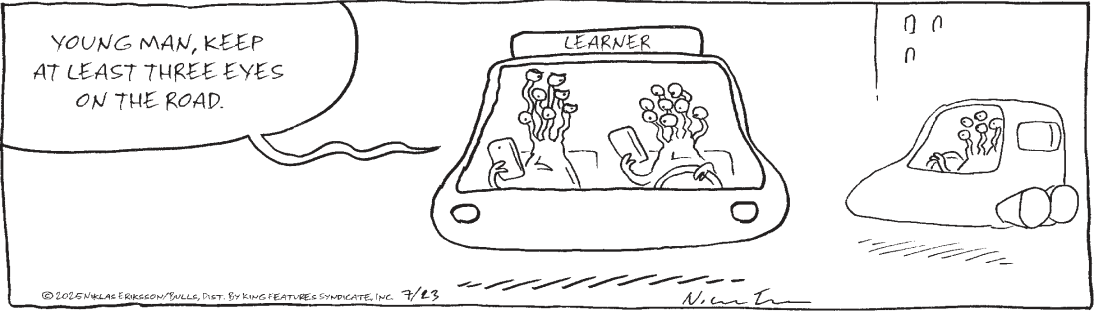
Non Sequitur



Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



7-23 CRYPTOQUIP

UTHD VIZGDM OTAEF OJGEFO

PF P NKAFTGDM AIFKHF, LPJH

OIEH FTHZ NALH UGFT P

LGDG-VPNJ MIPEPDFHH.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU WORKED FOR A GARBAGE REMOVAL SERVICE, I THINK YOU'D ALWAYS BE MAKING TRASH DECISIONS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals M

FACES

‘Shark Week’ tries some new moves

Dance competition among fresh Discovery Channel options

By Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

Fifty years ago, “Jaws” unlocked dread in millions about man-eating sharks. This summer, that fear may be somewhat reduced as they become contestants on a TV dance show.

Former “Dancing with the Stars” host Tom Bergeron steps up for a marketing masterstroke by Discovery Channel’s “Shark Week” — “Dancing with Sharks,” where humans and 20-foot-long hammer-head sharks do a little mambo.

“I had a decade-and-a-half experience of hosting a dance show, but this one was different,” Bergeron tells The Associated Press. “I’d often thought on ‘Dancing with the Stars,’ wouldn’t it be great if we could incorporate another species? And here I’ve finally got my dream come true.”

In the show, five scuba-diving shark handlers use bait to twirl and guide sharks into mini-waltzes, in what they call “the world’s most dangerous dance competition.”

One contestant wraps his arms around a nerf shark and spoons it. Another takes off her air tank and does a double backflip. A third — a hip-hop-loving shark handler — does an old-school head spin on the ocean

floor as sharks swirl.

“These are some of the best shark handlers in the world. These are people who know the nuances of sharks, know how they move, know how to behave, know how to safely move with them, and they’re guiding these sharks along as you would a partner,” says Kinga Philipps, a TV correspondent and one of the three judges. “It is so fluid and beautiful, all they really had to do is put a little bit of music to it and they’re actually dancing.”

It’s a shark-a-thon

“Dancing with Sharks” kicked off the week of programming, which includes shows on how to survive a shark attack, why New Smyrna Beach in Florida has earned the title of “The Shark Attack Capital of the World” and whether a mysterious dark-skinned shark off the coast of California is a mako, mutant or possibly a mako-and-great white hybrid.

The seven nights of new shows — and a related podcast — ends off the Mozambique coast with a once-a-year feeding frenzy that turns into a showdown between the sharks and their massive prey, the giant trevally.

“Shark Week” has become a key part of



Warner Bros. Discovery/AP
Jamie Ferguson interacts with a shark in “Dancing with Sharks” during Discovery Channel’s “Shark Week.”

the summer holiday TV schedule, a place where humans safe on land can see ancient apex predators unnervingly glide into view and snap open their jaws.

This year’s highlights also include the hunt for a 20-foot great white that can leap into the air — “Air Jaws: The Hunt for Colossus” — and a show about male and female great whites competing in a series of challenges to determine which sex is the superior predator, naturally called “Great White Sex Battle.”

Joseph Schneier, senior vice president of production and development at Discovery, says the shows are born from listening to what the diving and science community is seeing, like pro divers moving artistically with the sharks as they fed them, leading to “Dancing with Sharks.”

“We realized, well, there’s something here that we can go further with,” he says. “We’re lucky that sharks continue to surprise us. Which helps us get kind of new stories and new things to focus on. That’s been the mantra for us — the sharks are the stars, not the humans.”

As always, there is a deep respect for the creatures and strong science beneath the amusing titles, sharky puns, dramatic music and racy titles like “Frankenshark” and “Alien Sharks: Death Down Under.”

“It’s like putting your vegetables in a dessert,” Bergeron says. “You get all the allure of a ‘Dancing with Sharks’ or other specific shows, but in the midst of that you do learn a lot about sharks and ecology and the importance of sharks in the ecosystem. It’s all in your strawberry sundae.”

New this week: Judge Judy, ‘Happy Gilmore 2,’ Madonna

Associated Press

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

■ It’s been almost 30 years since we first met Adam Sandler’s hockey player-turned-golfer Happy Gilmore, but Sandler finally got the gang back together for a sequel: “Happy Gilmore 2,” coming to Netflix on Friday. This time around, Happy also has kids, including four hockey goon sons. Here’s hoping it’s as quotable as the first — we’ve been needing some new Sandlerisms.

■ Jenna Ortega and Paul Rudd play father and daughter in the horror-comedy “Death of a Unicorn,” about just that (and also exploitative billionaires). It hits HBO Max on Friday. Richard E. Grant and Will Poulter also star.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

Music

■ It is the stuff of pop music mythology. Madonna’s long-rumored album “Veronica Electronica” — originally conceived as a remix companion to 1998’s blockbuster “Ray of Light” — finally arrives Friday. It is that and more. Begin with the new-to-fans, original demo of “Gone, Gone, Gone.”

■ The second and final part of an expansive documentary series on the life and ca-

reer of Billy Joel hits HBO Max on Friday. And it’s not too late to catch up on the first half of “Billy Joel: And So It Goes,” either.

■ Rock ’n’ roll fans, listen up. On Friday, the original Alice Cooper band reunites to release “The Revenge of Alice Cooper,” the first album in more than 50 years to feature that lineup. It gives the album a sort of revived spirit — all high-octane riffs.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

Television

■ Judy Sheindlin, beloved for her syndicated series “Judge Judy” that ended production in 2021 after 25 years, rules on true crime in her new series for Prime Video. In “Justice on Trial,” actual criminal court cases are re-created by trial lawyers with Sheindlin presiding over the courtroom. All eight episodes are now available.

■ Malin Akerman and Brittany Snow star in “The Hunting Wives” for Netflix. It’s based on a thriller mystery novel by May Cobb. Snow plays Sophie, a woman whose husband’s job requires trading the East Coast for east Texas. She’s a fish out of water until she meets Margot (Akerman,) the queen bee of a group of women known as the Hunting Wives. And these wives like to party. Sophie finds Margot’s carefree lifestyle and confidence to be intoxicating until she gets caught up in a murder investigation. All eight episodes are now available.

■ A new Hulu miniseries called “Wash-



Netflix/AP
Adam Sandler’s hockey-player-turned-golfer returns in “Happy Gilmore 2.”

ington Black” is based on a book of the same name. Set in the early 1800s, Wash — short for George Washington Black — is born into slavery in Barbados. Wash’s talent for art and curiosity catches the attention of a scientist named Titch (played by Tom Ellis), who encourages his education. The series follows Wash’s adventures as he grows into a man played by newcomer Ernest King-ley Jr. Sterling K. Brown is an executive producer and also has a role in the show. Stream the episodes beginning Wednesday.

■ An acclaimed British crime drama called “Code of Silence” comes to BritBox on Thursday. Rose Ayling-Ellis plays a deaf cafeteria worker who begins working with the local police because of her ability to read lips. The show has already been renewed for a second season.

— Alicia Rancilio

‘Cosby Show’ actor drowns in Costa Rica

Associated Press

Malcolm-Jamal Warner, who as teenager Theo Huxtable on “The Cosby Show” was central to a cultural phenomenon that helped define the 1980s, died at 54 in an accidental drowning in Costa Rica, authorities there said Monday.

Costa Rica’s Judicial Investigation Department said Warner drowned July 19 on a beach on Costa Rica’s Caribbean coast.

Theo was the only son among four daughters in the household of Bill Cosby’s Cliff Huxtable and Phylicia Rashad’s Clair Huxtable on the NBC sitcom, and he would be one of the prime representations of American teenage life and Black boyhood on a show that was the most popular in America for much of its run from 1984 to 1992.

Warner worked for more than 40 years as an actor, also starring in the sitcoms “Malcolm & Eddie” and “Read Between the Lines,” and in the medical drama “The Resident.”

He played Theo Huxtable for eight seasons, appeared in 197 episodes of “The Cosby Show” and earned an Emmy nomination for supporting actor in a comedy in 1986.



Warner

SCOREBOARD/TENNIS

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Sent LHP Keegan Akin to FCL Orioles on a rehab assignment. Agreed to terms with CFs RJ Austin and Cam Lee, SSS Colin Yeaman and Jaiden Lo Re, LHPs Caden Hunter and Kailen Hamson and RHPs Hunter Allen and Dalton Neuschwander on contracts.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Agreed to terms with C Steven Lancia on a contract.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Sent RHP J.P. France to FCL Astros on a rehab assignment.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Agreed to terms with RHPs Michael Lombardi, Cameron Millar, Aiden Jimenez, Bryson Dudley, Shane Van Dam, Max Martin, Hunter Alberini, Matthew Hoskins, Randy Ramnarace, Kamden Edge and Max Poirier, LHPs Justin Lamkin, Cory Ronan and Ryan Ure, INFs Josh Hammond, Tyriq Kemp, Tyson Moran, JC Vanek and Connor Rasmussen, OFs Sean Gamble, Nolan Sailors, Luke Nowak and Hunter Ensley and C Brooks Bryan on contracts.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Reinstated OF Chris Taylor from the 10-day IL. Optioned OF Gustavo Campero to Salt Lake (PCL).

SEATTLE MARINERS — Selected the contract of LHP Brandyn Garcia from Tacoma (PCL). Optioned RHP Juan Burgos to Tacoma.

TEXAS RANGERS — Recalled RHP Cole Winn, INF/OF Michael Helman and 3B Josh Jung from Round Rock (PCL). Placed RHP Chris Martin on the 15-day IL. Optioned INF Justin Foscoe and OF Alejandro Osuna to Round Rock. Agreed to terms with SS Gavin Fien.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Recalled LHP Mason Fluhrty from Buffalo (IL). Optioned RHP Robinson Pina to Buffalo.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Agreed to terms with INF Kayson Cunningham, RHP Patrick Forbes, RHP Brian Curley, RHP Dean Livingston, OF Nathan Hall, RHP Sawyer Hawks, LHP Joe Ariola, RHP Jack Martinez, INF Wallace Clark, Inf Brady Counsell, LHP Luke Dotson, LHP LHP Tyler Montiel, RHP Alex Galvan, RHP Hayden Murphy, RHP Collin Rothermel, RHP, Joel Sarver, and RHP Raul Garayzar.

ATLANTA BRAVES — Designated RF Stuart Fairchild for assignment. Selected the contract of C Sandy Leon from Gwinnett (IL).

CHICAGO CUBS — Recalled RHP Ben Brown from Iowa (IL). Optioned RHP Ethan Roberts to Iowa.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Reactivated RHP Edgardo Henriquez from Oklahoma City (PCL). Designated RHP Lou Trivino for assignment.

NEW YORK METS — Transferred RHP Dedniel Nunez form the 15-day to the 60-day IL. Sent LHP Richard Lovelady to Syracuse (IL). Recalled C Francisco Alvarez from Syracuse. Optioned C Hayden Senger to Syracuse. Claimed RHP Rico Garcia off waivers from the New York Yankees.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Agreed to terms with RHP David Robertson on a one-year contract and optioned him to Lehigh Valley (IL).

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with 3B Murr Gray, RHP Jack Anker and SS Matt King on minor league contracts.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Signed LHP Emmanuel Polo to a minor league contract.

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Agreed to terms with INFs Gavin Kilen, Lorenzo Meola, Isaiah Barkett and Hayden Jatczak, OFs Trevor Cohen and Cameron Maldonado, LHPs Jordan Gottesman and Braydon Risley, RHPs Ben Bybee, Reid Worley, Cody Delvecchio, Trey Seeley, Garrett Langrell, Luke Mensik, Cooper McGrath and Dylan Carter and Cs Rod Barajas Jr., Broedy Poppe and Daniel Rogers to contracts. Agreed to terms with OF Damon Bravo.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Optioned RHP Gordon Graceffo to Memphis (IL) Recalled RHP Michael McGreevy from Memphis.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Agreed to terms with RHP Owen Puk, C Nick Hollifield, 1B Jacob Walsh, OF Jack Moroknek, LHP Ben Moore and RHP Tucker Biven. Agrees to terms with OF Jordan Williams to a minor league contract.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS — Signed G Chris Paul to a one-year contract.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Signed DL Kyon Barrs to a contract.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Released K Alex Hale.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Placed OLB Chaz Chambliss and TE Gavin Bartholomew on the active/physically unable to perform list.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed OLB Oluwafemi Oladejo to a contract.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Signed OLB Von Miller to a contract.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

ATLANTA UNITED — Waived MF Mateusz Klich.

MINNESOTA UNITED — Acquired \$1.6 million from St. Louis in exchange for F Sang Bin Jeong.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA				
Eastern Conference				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	15	6	.714	—
Atlanta	13	9	.591	2½
Indiana	12	11	.522	4
Washington	11	11	.500	4½
Chicago	7	15	.318	8½
Connecticut	3	19	.136	12½

Western Conference				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	20	4	.833	—
Phoenix	15	7	.682	4
Seattle	14	9	.609	5½
Las Vegas	11	11	.500	8
Golden State	10	12	.455	9
Los Angeles	8	14	.364	11
Dallas	6	17	.261	13½

Monday's games

No games scheduled.

Tuesday's games

Los Angeles at Washington
Chicago at Minnesota
Indiana at New York
Atlanta at Las Vegas
Dallas at Seattle

Wednesday's games

Atlanta at Phoenix

PRO SOCCER

MLS						
Western Conference						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
San Diego FC	13	7	4	43	47	32
Vancouver	12	5	6	42	39	26
Minn. United	11	5	8	41	40	27
Seattle	10	6	7	37	37	33
LA FC	10	5	6	36	39	27
Portland	9	7	7	34	32	32
Colorado	8	10	6	30	30	36
Austin FC	8	8	6	30	17	24
San Jose	7	9	8	29	46	42
Real Salt Lake	8	11	4	28	24	29
Houston	7	11	6	27	30	39
FC Dallas	6	10	7	25	32	41
Sporting KC	6	11	6	24	36	42
St Louis City	4	13	6	18	23	38
LA Galaxy	3	14	7	16	28	48

Eastern Conference						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Cincinnati	15	6	3	48	39	31
Nashville	14	5	5	47	42	25
Philadelphia	14	5	5	47	40	23
Columbus	12	4	8	44	40	33
Inter Miami CF	12	4	5	41	49	34
Orlando City	10	6	8	38	43	32
Charlotte FC	11	11	2	35	41	39
NYC FC	10	8	5	35	30	26
New York	9	9	6	33	39	35
Chicago	9	9	5	32	44	40
New England	6	10	7	25	30	32
Toronto FC	5	12	6	21	25	30
Atlanta	4	11	8	20	27	43
D.C. United	4	13	7	19	20	45
CF Montréal	3	15	6	15	20	45

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

Saturday's games

Charlotte FC 3, Atlanta 2
Columbus 2, D.C. United 1
Chicago 2, CF Montréal 0
Orlando City 2, New England 1
Miami 5, New York 1
FC Dallas 3, St Louis City 0
Philadelphia 1, Houston 1, tie
New York City FC 1, Sporting Kansas City 1, tie

Nashville 1, Toronto FC 0
Seattle 3, San Jose 2
Cincinnati 1, Real Salt Lake 0
LA Galaxy 3, Los Angeles FC 3, tie
Minnesota 1, Portland 1, tie
Vancouver 1, San Diego FC 1, tie

Friday, July 25

Orlando City at Columbus
CF Montréal at New England
New York City FC at FC Dallas
LA Galaxy at Houston
Portland at Los Angeles FC
Nashville at San Diego FC

Saturday, July 26

Cincinnati at Miami
Seattle at Atlanta
Toronto FC at Charlotte FC
Austin FC at D.C. United
Colorado at Philadelphia
New York at Chicago
Minnesota at St Louis City
San Jose at Real Salt Lake
Sporting Kansas City at Vancouver



Nick Wass/AP

Venus Williams twirls and waves to the crowd after winning a doubles match with Hailey Baptiste against Eugenie Bouchard and Clervie Ngounoue at the Citi Open on Monday in Washington, D.C.

Venus Williams wins doubles match in tournament return

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Competing at a tournament for the first time in more than a year, and in doubles for the first time in nearly three, Venus Williams hit a big serve on her initial delivery at the DC Open on Monday and, curiously, it was wiped out by a foot-fault call.

The 45-year-old Williams, an owner of 21 Grand Slam titles across singles and doubles, smiled incredulously, as did the other three players involved in the match in front of a full crowd that eventually included NBA star Kevin Durant. And then Williams carried on, displaying her trademark power on some strokes while teaming with Hailey Baptiste for a 6-3, 6-1 victory against 2014 Wimbledon runner-up Eugenie Bouchard and Clervie Ngounoue.

“It’s just nice to be able to play. Where I am at this year is so much different where I was at last year. It’s night and day, being able to be here and prepare for the tournament as opposed to preparing for surgery a year ago,” said Williams, who spoke in an interview with NBC earlier this month about having a procedure to remove fibroids from her uterus. “At the end of the day, it doesn’t really matter if your health is not there. So it definitely put it in perspective for me and maybe made it easier to make the decision to maybe come back out here and maybe play even freer.”

Her most recent match had been at the Miami Open in March 2024, and she said Sunday that she had two goals in Washington: to have fun and to win.

She did both — winning, yes, and contributing plenty to the cause, but also having a good time, high-fiving or fist-bumping Baptiste after some of their best points, laughing after others and waving to an appreciative group of fans that roared over and over for Williams. She and Baptiste hugged when it ended.

“The crowd was insane. From the moment we stepped out of the players area, you could kind of feel the buzz. Walking onto the court, just felt all the love for the both of us,” said Baptiste, a 23-year-old from Washington. “I was obviously very nervous to play with her. I didn’t want to let her down, first match back and everything.”

It was full at 3,000-seat John Harris Court, where Durant showed up late in the first set, while across the way at the 7,500-capacity main stadium, only a few dozen spectators were scattered in the stands for an all-American singles match in which Reilly Opelka defeated Murphy Cas-sone.

Asked to comment about the court assignments, tournament director Daniel Vallverdú said: “The tournament works to balance full singles and doubles ATP and WTA schedules, while coordinating with broadcaster requests for court assignments.”

When Williams, wearing a white visor as she so often has, was introduced before participating in doubles for the first time since the 2022 U.S. Open — when her partner was younger sister Serena — the stadium announcer mentioned that Venus has “one of the best serves in the history of the game,” that she “turned pro in the last century” and “has won everything.”

That includes seven major singles trophies — five at Wimbledon, two at the U.S. Open — and an additional 14 in doubles with Serena, plus four Olympic gold medals.

“She’s 14 years older than me and still plugging away,” said Bouchard, 31, a former top-five player who announced that next week’s tournament in Montreal will be the last of her career. “I have nothing but respect for her. She’s such a legend. That was a pretty cool crowd for a doubles match.”

They sure were into it Monday, standing with phone cameras raised high when Venus first appeared at the court — and again when it ended.

There will be other opportunities to see her this week: In singles, Williams was scheduled to play Tuesday night against Peyton Stearns, a 23-year-old American currently ranked No. 35 who won NCAA singles and team championships at the University of Texas.

“I have been training for months to get to this moment,” Williams said.

MLB



GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Pirates All-Star pitcher Paul Skenes needed just 86 pitches to get through six innings against the Detroit Tigers on Monday in Pittsburgh.

Skenes armed with perspective

Pittsburgh pitcher understands management’s desire to preserve long-term assets

By Will Graves
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Paul Skenes wants the ball. All the time.

Yet the only pitcher in major league history to start the All-Star Game in each of his first two seasons also understands the Pittsburgh Pirates are intent on playing the long game with his electric right arm.

They did a year ago, when they put Skenes on a soft innings cap during his remarkable rookie season. They’re doing it again this summer. To a point, anyway.

So when Skenes walked into the dugout on Monday night after needing 86 pitches to get through six innings against the Detroit Tigers, the 23-year-old didn’t put up a fight when manager Don Kelly turned to reliever Braxton Ashcraft for the seventh in what eventually became a 3-0 victory.

“I haven’t had a real start in 10 days,” Skenes said after lowering his ERA to 1.91, the best in the majors. “So it’s a little bit of a ramp back up. I think that it was about as good as it could have been ... a pretty good starting point.”

Sure looked like it. Skenes struck out six while allowing three hits to pick up his first victory since late May. The dry spell had nothing to do with his pitching — Skenes had a 1.77 ERA in his last eight starts entering Monday. Instead, it can be blamed on an offense that has scored the fewest runs in the majors.

Skenes has taken the high road amid his team’s struggles, to the point that Kelly needs to remind himself that Skenes just turned 23 less than two months ago.

“He’s wise beyond his years,” Kelly said. “The maturity level he shows when he’s out there, really, I don’t remember seeing any-

body in my time (who’s had that).”

The Pirates are relying on it as they try to help him navigate his first full season in the big leagues. He bought in — begrudgingly at first — to the plan to monitor his workload as a rookie. This year, he wanted to take the ball and let it rip.

And while he has — Skenes has thrown 127 innings this season, nearly matching the 133 he tossed after being called up last May — Pittsburgh is trying to find the safest, healthiest path to help him make it to late September.

“There’s a long way to go still. So just going to keep pitching until they take the ball out of my hands.”

Paul Skenes
on his approach to limited pitch counts

“I don’t think anybody has the perfect answer,” Kelly said. “Just trying to make sure that we’re taking everything into account and collaborating with people that know more than even I do about all of this stuff and taking everybody’s thoughts into consideration and finding what we feel is the best way to go.”

Skenes is a part of that process, and he’s amenable, within reason. He hasn’t thrown more than 88 pitches in any of his four starts this month, even though he’s allowed all of two runs in the process.

“There’s still going to be starts where it’s

like, ‘Hey, go out there and pitch,’” Skenes said. “I think we’re just going to pick our times with that. So I don’t know. There’s a long way to go still. So just going to keep pitching until they take the ball out of my hands.”

Kelly is hopeful Skenes can flirt with reaching 200 innings, a goal that seems doable if he can make another dozen starts like his first 21 this season. Skenes is a Cy Young Award contender despite playing for a last-place team that will likely be a seller at the trade deadline.

The Pirates’ victory Monday night was their second in their last 13 games. The energy that characterized Kelly’s first 50 games on the job after replacing Derek Shelton in May has faded in the summer heat.

All around Skenes on Monday, there were signs of a club already looking to the future — again. A handful of the team’s picks in last week’s draft stood on the field at PNC Park after signing contracts. Johan Oviedo, who hasn’t pitched in the majors since 2023 while recovering from Tommy John surgery, is hopeful to be back this season, though a return to the rotation might have to wait until 2026.

The team’s misfortunes, however, have not affected Skenes’ mindset or his performance. He can only control what he can control. Things haven’t gone according to plan — not by a long shot — for Pittsburgh. All the face of the franchise can do is take the ball every handful of days and do his part.

If that means he won’t get to throw until he thinks he’s done some nights, so be it. He’s willing to go along with whatever the plan is, with one notable exception.

“Not skipping a start,” Skenes said. “That’s a no-go. That’s not good. ... That’s not ideal. We’ve done a good job to this point, just working within our own parameters.”

Brewers: Tight-knit group leads to fun, wins

FROM PAGE 24

“I think that’s a lot of credit to our front office and our coaching staff, and just putting the right guys in the room,” Woodruff said. “When you can get guys that play for each other and play with each other and just have fun, that’s the biggest thing. There’s a reason why we’ve done this over the last eight, nine years.”

Since 2018, the Brewers have won the NL Central four times and are on track to make it three straight seasons, doing so mostly without “household names,” as Woodruff said.

This season, it’s been a collective, well-balanced effort propelling Milwaukee to frequent victories, including six against the Los Angeles Dodgers during their active win streak.

Second baseman Brice Turang is leading the club’s position players with three Wins Above Replacement, per Baseball Reference. Twenty-one-year old outfielder Jackson Chourio remains a force to be reckoned with after a standout rookie season. And right-hander Freddy Peralta leads all major league pitchers with 12 wins.

All of it has led to quite the positive clubhouse culture from the perspective of folks like shortstop Joey Ortiz.

“Winning’s great, winning’s fun, It’s a blessing to come to a big-league field and play the game,” Ortiz said. “So, I feel like winning is just an extra on top of that. Everyone’s so close in the locker room that I don’t even think — of course we want to win, but I don’t think winning matters. I think we have a great time just being together, and I think it shows on the field.”

It’s a tight-knit group led by reigning National League manager of the year Pat Murphy. The baseball lifer is aware his team continues to gain confidence with each passing win, but that there is still much time remaining in the regular season.

The trade deadline hasn’t even come and gone, so the small-market Brewers still have plenty of time to work with — after all, as Murphy put it, it’s only July.

“There’s more to be done. There’s more opportunity,” Murphy said. “There’s no reason to coast. There’s every reason to know you’re in a fight. You drop your guard, ‘Whack!’ and sometimes you don’t recover from that.”

MLB

ROUNDUP

Wild, rare walk-off win for Phillies

Sosa drives in decisive run in 10th when Red Sox’s Narváez called for catcher’s interference

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Edmundo Sosa’s teammates on the Philadelphia Phillies mobbed him beyond first base after a 3-2, walk-off win over the Boston Red Sox on Monday night.

In the moment, it didn’t matter to him that he’d gotten there thanks to a call of catcher’s interference.

“To be honest, this feels exactly like a home run,” Sosa said through a translator. “The most important thing about it is that we end up winning the game, and that’s what we went out to do.”

Sosa won the game when, with the bases loaded and no out in the 10th inning, his check swing on a 2-2 pitch struck the glove of catcher Carlos Narváez.

The Phillies dugout called for a review, which showed the contact, allowing Sosa to take first and automatic runner Brandon Marsh to score the winning run.

“I felt my barrel was a little late on the pitch,” said Sosa, who entered as a pinch-hitter in the eighth and singled. “And as I go through my swing path, I feel like I hit the catcher’s glove. And I told the ump that I think I felt something, and I started signaling in the dug-out.”

It’s the first instance of a walk-off catcher’s interference in a major league game since Aug. 1, 1971, when the Los Angeles Dodgers won on a call against Cincinnati Reds catcher Johnny Bench.

The play went down as an error for Narváez. “I don’t feel I was that close to the hitter,” Narváez said. “Everything went so quick. Really tough for that to happen in that moment to cost us the game.”

The Phillies won without putting a ball in play in the 10th. Marsh started the inning at second base. Otto Kemp, trying to bunt him to third, drew a walk.

The first delivery to Max Kepler was a wild pitch that moved the runners to second and third, and the Red Sox intentionally walked Kepler. Sosa went down 0-2, fouled a pitch off, then offered at an 86 mph slider, hitting only the thumb of Narváez’s glove to decide the game.

Guardians 10, Orioles 5: José Ramírez had a three-run homer in the first inning, Brayan Rocchio delivered a two-run single in the seventh and Cleveland pulled away for a home victory over Baltimore.

Kyle Manzardo put the Guardians in front 6-5 with a solo homer in the sixth off Colin Selby (0-1).

Cleveland starter Tanner Bibee (6-9) worked seven innings, allowing five runs and six hits.

Padres 2, Marlins 1: Jackson Merrill and Martín Maldonado had run-scoring hits in the second inning and visiting San Diego held on to beat Miami.

Merrill had an RBI single that scored Xander Bogaerts. Maldonado followed with a double down the left field line off Eury Pérez (3-3) that scored Merrill from first and put San Diego up 2-0.

Miami’s Kyle Stowers hit a solo homer off Padres starter Randy Vásquez that made it 2-1 in the fourth.

Stowers connected on a 1-0 changeup and sent it 400 feet to left-center for his 22nd home run of the season.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

The Phillies’ Edmundo Sosa hits the glove of Boston Red Sox catcher Carlos Narváez for catcher’s interference with the bases loaded in the 10th inning on Monday in Philadelphia.

Blue Jays 4, Yankees 1: Bo Bichette hit a go-ahead, two-run double in a four-run fifth, Kevin Gausman worked seven strong innings and host Toronto beat New York, extending their home winning streak to a franchise-record 11 games.

Yankees third baseman Oswaldo Peraza and shortstop Anthony Volpe both made throwing errors that led to runs in the fifth.

Mets 7, Angels 5: Juan Soto hit a tying single in the seventh inning, Francisco Alvarez delivered a big double in his return from the minors and host New York Mets rallied past Los Angeles.

Taylor Ward had three RBIs for the Angels, who tagged ineffective Mets ace Kodai Senga for four earned runs in three innings. Logan O’Hoppe hit a solo homer.

Braves 9, Giants 5: Rookie Drake Baldwin drove in six runs, Ronald Acuña Jr. scored three times and host Atlanta beat San Francisco, handing the Giants their season-high sixth straight loss.

Baldwin was 3-for-5 and scored two runs. Acuña had a double and three walks.

The Braves took a 5-1 lead in the first inning thanks to a wild start from Giants starter Hayden Birdsong (4-4).

Birdsong walked the first three batters before Baldwin cleared the bases with a three-run double.

Nationals 10, Reds 8: Josh Bell homered and doubled, Daylen Lile hit a three-run triple and host Washington beat Cincinnati.

Lile cleared the bases in a four-run first and Bell hit a second-deck solo homer, his 12th, in a three-run third to lead 7-0.

The Reds strung together four straight RBI singles in a five-run fourth inning, knocking out Nationals starter Jake Irvin.

White Sox 8, Rays 3: Brooks Baldwin hit a three-run homer, Miguel Vargas added a two-run shot and visiting Chicago beat Tampa Bay for their season-high fourth straight win.

Baldwin gave the White Sox a 3-0 lead in the second and Vargas made it 8-2 with a two-run homer in the fifth.

Rangers 7, Athletics 2: Josh Jung homered and scored three times in his return to the majors, Cody Freeman and Michael Helman had big-league firsts on consecutive pitches and host Texas beat the Athletics.

The Rangers led for good after a four-run fifth inning featuring the firsts. Freeman had a tiebreaking RBI double for his first MLB hit and RBI.

Royals 12, Cubs 4: Salvador Perez homered twice and drove in four runs, Jac Caglianone and John Rave added solo shots and visiting Kansas City beat Chicago.

Chicago’s Matt Shaw and Carson Kelly went deep off Noah Cameron (4-4) in the second, but the rookie lefthander was in control for most of the first six innings.

Cardinals 6, Rockies 2: Willson Contreras homered drove in two runs to lead St. Louis to an away victory over Colorado.

Brendan Donovan and Nolan Arenado hit doubles and joined Jordan Walker with two hits apiece in a 15-hit night.

The Rockies took a 2-0 lead in the third, but Contreras hit a solo homer and Winn doubled in Arenado to tie the game in the fourth.

Astros 6, Diamondbacks 3: Brice Matthews hit his first two big-league homers and had five RBIs, Christian Walker added an RBI double in his return to Chase Field and visiting Houston beat Arizona.

Matthews went deep in the second inning with a three-run shot, turning a 1-0 deficit into a 3-1 lead. His two-run homer in the seventh pushed the Astros ahead 6-3.

Dodgers 5, Twins 2: Shohei Ohtani hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the bottom of the first after giving up a leadoff homer to Byron Buxton, helping host Los Angeles beat Minnesota.

Buxton sent Ohtani’s second pitch of the game halfway up the left field pavilion.

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	59	41	.590	—
New York	55	45	.550	4
Boston	54	48	.529	6
Tampa Bay	52	49	.515	7½
Baltimore	44	55	.444	14½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	60	41	.594	—
Cleveland	49	50	.495	10
Kansas City	49	52	.485	11
Minnesota	48	52	.480	11½
Chicago	36	65	.356	24
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	58	42	.580	—
Seattle	53	47	.530	5
Texas	51	50	.505	7½
Los Angeles	49	51	.490	9
Athletics	42	60	.412	17
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	57	43	.570	—
New York	57	44	.564	½
Miami	46	53	.465	10½
Atlanta	44	55	.444	12½
Washington	40	60	.400	17
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	60	40	.600	—
Chicago	59	41	.590	1
Cincinnati	52	49	.515	8½
St. Louis	52	49	.515	8½
Pittsburgh	40	61	.396	20½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	59	42	.584	—
San Diego	55	45	.550	3½
San Francisco	52	49	.515	7
Arizona	50	51	.495	9
Colorado	24	76	.240	34½
Monday's games				
Pittsburgh 3, Detroit 0 Philadelphia 3, Boston 2, 10 innings Cleveland 10, Baltimore 5 Toronto 4, N.Y. Yankees 1 N.Y. Mets 7, L.A. Angels 5 Texas 7, Athletics 2 Chicago White Sox 8, Tampa Bay 3 Kansas City 12, Chicago Cubs 4 Milwaukee 6, Seattle 0 Houston 6, Arizona 3 L.A. Dodgers 5, Minnesota 2 San Diego 2, Miami 1 Washington 10, Cincinnati 8 Atlanta 9, San Francisco 5 St. Louis 6, Colorado 2				
Tuesday's games				
Baltimore at Cleveland Detroit at Pittsburgh Boston at Philadelphia N.Y. Yankees at Toronto L.A. Angels at N.Y. Mets Chicago White Sox at Tampa Bay Athletics at Texas Kansas City at Chicago Cubs Houston at Arizona Milwaukee at Seattle Minnesota at L.A. Dodgers San Diego at Miami Cincinnati at Washington San Francisco at Atlanta St. Louis at Colorado				
Wednesday's games				
Detroit (Melton 0-0) at Pittsburgh (Falter 6-5) L.A. Angels (TBD) at N.Y. Mets (Manaea 0-1) Kansas City (Lugo 6-5) at Chicago Cubs (Rea 8-3) Houston (Walter 1-3) at Arizona (Pfaadt 10-6) Milwaukee (Priester 8-2) at Seattle (Castillo 7-5) Minnesota (Paddock 3-9) at L.A. Dodgers (Glasnow 1-1) Baltimore (Morton 5-8) at Cleveland (Ceconni 5-4) Boston (Giolito 6-2) at Philadelphia (Luzardo 8-5) N.Y. Yankees (Fried 11-3) at Toronto (Bassitt 10-4) Chicago White Sox (Cannon 4-7) at Tampa Bay (Bradley 6-6) Athletics (Sears 7-8) at Texas (Corbin 6-7) Cincinnati (Lodolo 7-6) at Washington (Soroka 3-7) San Diego (Cease 3-9) at Miami (Alcantara 4-9) San Francisco (Verlander 0-8) at Atlanta (Strider 4-7) St. Louis (Pallante 5-6) at Colorado (Freeland 2-10)				
Thursday's games				
Baltimore at Cleveland Toronto at Detroit Athletics at Houston Seattle at L.A. Angels San Diego at St. Louis				

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/NBA/WNBA



PAUL SANCYA/AP
Michigan coach Sherrone Moore, center, talks with quarterbacks Jady Davis, left, and Bryce Underwood after a spring game on April 19. Moore might be suspended for the first two games of this season.

Big Ten to NCAA: Michigan has been punished enough

BY LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Big Ten Commissioner Tony Petitti sent a letter to the NCAA Committee on Infractions suggesting that Michigan’s football program should not face more sanctions stemming from a sign-stealing scheme, according to two people familiar with the situation.

They spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity Monday because no one is authorized to comment on an ongoing NCAA investigation.

Petitti’s letter was shared during last month’s hearing because he was unable to attend while recovering from hip surgery, Big Ten Deputy Commissioner Diane Dietz said.

ESPN was first to report some details of Petitti’s letter.

The NCAA alleged last year in a notice relating to its sign-stealing investigation that current coach Sherrone Moore violated rules as an assistant under former coach Jim Harbaugh, who served a three-game suspension in exchange for the conference dropping its own investigation into the allegations after the two ended up in court.

After winning the 2023 national championship, Harbaugh left to lead the Los Angeles Chargers.

Moore was also accused of deleting text messages with sign-stealer Connor Stalions before they were recovered and provided to the NCAA. Moore has said he has and will continue to cooperate with the NCAA’s investigation.

The NCAA investigation surfaced early in the 2023 season amid allegations that Michigan used a robust in-person scouting

and sign-stealing operation conducted by Stalions, a former a low-level staffer. He was suspended by the school and later resigned. Stalions, who did not participate in the NCAA investigation, recently said he knew almost every signal opponents used in seven games over two seasons.

The Wolverines are prepared to suspend Moore for two games during the coming season. The NCAA will decide if that self-imposed sanction is enough to address allegations that Moore failed to cooperate in an investigation.

The governing body takes three months on average for contested cases to make a final decision.

Michigan opens the season on Aug. 30 at home against New Mexico State and at Oklahoma on Sept. 6.

Harbaugh was suspended by the Big Ten, three weeks after an investigation by the NCAA into the allegations began. Hours later, the Wolverines asked a court for an injunction and temporary restraining order, and the two sides narrowly avoided a court hearing.

Harbaugh has repeatedly denied any involvement with Stalions’ apparent scheme.

The NCAA does not have rules against stealing signs, but does prohibit schools from sending scouts to the games of future opponents and using electronic equipment to record another team’s signals.

The NCAA previously put Michigan on three years of probation, fined the school and implemented recruiting limits after reaching a negotiated resolution in a recruiting case and banned Harbaugh from coaching college football for four years.

Paul returning to Clippers for likely end of his career

BY BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Chris Paul is rejoining the Los Angeles Clippers for what’s expected to be the point guard’s 21st and final NBA season.

The team confirmed Monday afternoon that Paul had signed. He led Los Angeles to the playoffs in each of his six seasons in Los Angeles.

“Chris is one of the most impactful players ever to wear a Clippers uniform and it’s appropriate that he returns to the team for this chapter of his career,” Lawrence Frank, president of basketball operations, said in a statement.

Paul, a 12-time All-Star, was a free agent after playing all 82 games for San Antonio last season, becoming the first NBA player to do so in his 20th season or later. He averaged 8.8 points and 7.4 assists while shooting 43% from the floor.

Paul had stated that he wanted to play the upcoming season close to his family in LA.

He joins a veteran roster that includes new additions guard Bradley Beal, forward John Collins and center Brook Lopez, as well as Kawhi Leonard, James Harden and Bogdan Bogdanovic.

“Chris will help fortify our backcourt with his exceptional ballhandling, playmaking and shooting,” Frank said Monday.

Paul played six seasons for the Clippers during their “Lob City” era with Blake Griffin and DeAndre Jordan. He made five All-Star teams from 2012 to 2017 and his 4,023 assists are still the most in franchise history. He averaged 18.8 points, 9.8 assists, 4.2 rebounds and 2.2 steals in 409 games.

Paul left Los Angeles for Houston in 2017 because he felt it was time for a change and wanted to compete for a championship with Harden. Paul spent two seasons with the Rockets before going to the Oklahoma City Thunder for one season. He then spent three years with the Phoenix Suns and one with the Golden State Warriors before joining the Spurs last season, who finished 13th in the Western Conference at 34-48.

The Clippers finished fifth at 50-32 and lost to the Denver Nuggets in seven games in the first round.

Frank had said Saturday that the team was “strongly considering” signing Paul to join a crowded



DARREN ABATE/AP
After playing one season with the San Antonio Spurs, Chris Paul is returning to the Los Angeles Clippers for his 21st and likely final NBA season.

guard rotation of Harden, Beal, Bogdanovic and Kris Dunn.

Paul will come off the bench.

“He is joining us as a reserve point guard and is excited to fill whatever role (coach) Tyronn Lue asks him to play,” Frank said. “He wants to be part of the group and we’re fortunate to have him back.”

LA wants to preserve Harden, who played nearly 2,800 minutes last season at age 35 in his 16th NBA season. It views Paul as insurance against injuries that typically impact a roster during an 82-game season, plus the playoffs.

“Role awareness, especially in this next roster spot, will be critical,” Frank said.

WNBA quickly jumping into second half after short break

BY DOUG FEINBERG
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The WNBA tips off the second half of its season on Tuesday night with 10 of the 13 teams playing.

One player who won’t be competing for the immediate future is Caitlin Clark, who is recovering from a right groin injury she suffered last week. Clark missed Indiana’s final game before the All-Star break with an injured right groin and pulled out of Friday night’s 3-point contest as well as Saturday’s All-Star Game.

Clark told reporters on Saturday night that she had been getting treatment during the festivities, which also took place in Indianapolis. While she is improving, Fever coach Stephanie White said, Indiana intends to be cautious with

Clark, who missed 10 games during the first half of the season with three different muscle injuries.

Players weren’t thrilled having to play so soon after the All-Star break and hope to add more of a break in the next collective bargaining agreement they are currently negotiating with the league.

Atlanta has back-to-back games Tuesday and Wednesday while New York and many other teams have three games this week.

“It’s kind of the health and safety of it all,” the Liberty’s Breanna Stewart said. “Players having time to rest and recover, but also if we want the product in the All-Star Game to be better we have to have time between games, like there’s no way that you’re going to have a super competitive All-Star Game when we play Tuesday.”

New York added some reinforcements for the second half of the season, getting a commitment from Emma Meesseman to join the team once she gets her visa. The Liberty also added Stephanie Talbot, who was waived by Golden State, strengthening New York’s bench. The Liberty also got back a healthy Jonquel Jones, who missed the last month before the break to recover from a sprained ankle.

Going into Tuesday, defending champion New York is second in the standings behind Minnesota.

Game of the week

Phoenix at New York, Friday. Two of the top three teams in the league meet again in New York with the Liberty hoping to avenge a 15-point home loss last month.

NFL



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

Cincinnati picked Shemar Stewart 17th overall in April's draft, but he remains unsigned over contract disputes as the Bengals began training camp Saturday. Stewart is the only first-round pick who has yet to sign.

Bengals face uncertainty with Hendrickson, Stewart

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Coach Zac Taylor hopes Trey Hendrickson and Shemar Stewart will be his starting defensive ends when the Bengals open the season Sept. 7 at Cleveland.

The odds of both players being on the field when training camp practices open Wednesday, though, are slim.

Stewart, the 17th overall pick in April's draft, did not report with the rest of Cincinnati's rookies on Saturday. The Bengals' veterans, including Hendrickson, were scheduled to report Tuesday.

"Those two guys are guys I have tremendous regard for. Trey and Shemar, we wouldn't have them here if we didn't believe in them as people and players," owner Mike Brown said Monday. "Things like this happen in the NFL. We accept it. We don't internalize it. We're not trying to hold grudges or anything like that. We have to do what's best for our football team. If I thought we were being unfair in ways, it would be a different story. But I don't."

Taylor said he talked to Hendrickson a couple of days ago, but wasn't sure if he would see him this week.

Hendrickson was an All-Pro selection last season after he led the league with 17½ sacks. He did not attend last month's mandatory minicamp, but did make an appearance during an offseason workout in May to vent his frustrations about negotiations.

Hendrickson is seeking a long-term extension with an amount of guaranteed money that matches what the league's top pass rushers are earning. He is scheduled to earn \$15.8 million in base salary and has a cap number of \$18.7 million.

"He's earned a raise and an extension, and we'll continue to see if we can come together on something," director of player personnel Duke Tobin said. "Having good players is a good problem to have, and we've got a lot of good players, and we've got a lot of highly paid players, and fitting it together is what we're working for."

Tobin took an opposite approach in discussing Stewart, who is the only first-round pick who hasn't signed.

Cincinnati and Stewart are deadlocked over contract language that could potentially void future guarantees if there are any off-field incidents.

Other teams have had that language, but this is the first time the Bengals are trying to include that provision with a first-round pick.

"It's a very peculiar thing, it isn't about money. That's been agreed to for months," Brown said. "It is a negotiation that has reached the level of, I can only think of a word I shouldn't use here, but it's silliness. We'll have to wait until we get a better result. I think eventually that's going to happen. I don't think it's going to happen today or tomorrow, but at some point it will."

The two sides though have been at odds since Stewart was drafted April 24. He did not sign an injury waiver to practice with teammates during offseason workouts while still unsigned, a rare move by a rookie player.

"I think Shemar needs to be here. The number one thing a young player can do is have a fast start and have a good rookie season. That normally translates into a long productive NFL career, and he needs to be here getting to work on it," Tobin said.

Tobin tried to deflect blaming Stewart, instead going after his agent, Zac Hiller.

"He's listening to the advice that he's paying for. I don't understand or believe or agree with the advice. But I'm not the one paying for it," Tobin said. "If I thought we were treating him unfairly as it relates to all the other draft picks in this year's draft, then maybe it'd be a different story. But we're not. Again, I don't fully understand where things are there."

Hiller said in a text message to The Associated Press: "Duke Tobin has had no involvement in this negotiation. It seems to be above his pay grade."

Defensive coordinator Al Golden is hoping to see both players as soon as possible. Cincinnati (9-8 last season) finished 25th in the league in total defense (348.3 yards allowed per game) and lost four games last season in which it scored at least 30 points.

"I think the transition will be easier for Trey, cause we're gonna ask him to do things that are in the realm of his skill set, whereas Shamar has to learn our core fundamentals and implement everything that he's learned off the field and on the field, so that's gonna take some time," said Golden, who is in his first year as defensive coordinator.

"There's a time constraint on what he's done on the field and obviously we need to get him out there and and get him going."



Hendrickson

Jones: 'Nothing new' on Cowboys' contract dispute with Parsons

By DAN GREENSPAN
Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — Given that the Dallas Cowboys have gone 29 seasons since appearing in an NFC championship game — the longest drought in the conference — owner Jerry Jones has found himself occasionally considering whether to step down as general manager.

"Yes, momentary," Jones said Monday. "Small fractions of seconds, I promise you."

With his player personnel duties seemingly not changing anytime soon, Jones remains focused on how to get Dallas back to the Super Bowl. That seems unlikely to happen anytime soon without a happy, healthy and productive Micah Parsons in the fold, and the star defender's contract dispute was primary topic of discussion Monday before the start of training camp.

"There's nothing new about what we're talking about here today relative to contracts. That's been going on a long time now," Jones said.

"If you say, well, if you don't get him in you're going to lose the first two games, then go on to win the Super Bowl, well, we'll take that," he continued, referencing running back Emmitt Smith's 1993 holdout.

There were no updates on Parsons' on-field status from Jones, executive vice president of personnel Stephen Jones or new coach Brian Schottenheimer ahead of the team's annual, nearly monthlong stop in Ventura County. It's the second straight offseason where financial dealings with standout players risk overshadowing the Cowboys' football preparations.

Quarterback Dak Prescott participated in training camp last

year before getting a new contract before the start of the season that made him the NFL's highest-paid player. Wide receiver CeeDee Lamb held out of camp before receiving a new \$136 million, four-year contract with \$100 million guaranteed last August. Those protracted dealings came ahead of a 7-10 season that marked the end of Mike McCarthy's five-year run as coach.

Parsons had 12 sacks and 12 tackles for loss in 13 games, the lowest tallies of his four seasons in Dallas in each category. The 26-year-old defensive end is at camp, something the elder Jones appreciates, but it isn't clear if Parsons will participate in the first practice on Tuesday. He is going into the fifth and final year of his rookie contract, and the Cowboys would be able to apply the franchise tag in 2026.

Jones said he had not negotiated directly with Parsons' agent, David Mulugheta, though Stephen Jones later clarified he is typically the one who might handles such discussions.

"Obviously, we don't have a deal with Micah, and we have work to do. That's the only thing I would comment on," Stephen Jones said when asked what was holding up a potential deal that will almost certainly make Parsons the league's highest-paid defender.

Jones doesn't believe a likely Parsons hold-in would impact the team's development during camp, which runs through Aug. 14.

"I'm not concerned at all about what our team can be this year, and develop and develop into, and what we make of our training camp," Jones said. "I'm not at all concerned about a contract that involves and will affect that in any way, I can't emphasize that enough."



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Dallas Cowboys owner, president and general manager Jerry Jones speaks to reporters to open training camp Monday in Oxnard, Calif.

SPORTS



Missing pieces
Bengals open camp facing questions on Hendrickson, Stewart » **NFL, Page 23**



PHOTOS BY LINDSEY WASSON/AP

Milwaukee's Joey Ortiz celebrates a single with base coach Julio Borbon on Monday in Seattle. Below: Brewers pitcher Brandon Woodruff returned this month after missing all of 2024.



Brewers don't miss a beat

Milwaukee 1st NL team to reach 60 victories despite offseason roster shakeup

BY ANDREW DESTIN
Associated Press

SEATTLE — At first, Brandon Woodruff was caught a bit off guard. Milwaukee's starting pitcher was fresh off a dazzling performance, one in which he tossed six innings of two-hit ball en route to the club's 6-0 win against the Seattle Mariners. But upon learning the victory gave the Brewers 11 wins in a row but also the best record in the National League, Woodruff was taken aback — but only briefly.

"Doesn't surprise me," Woodruff said. "We got a lot of great guys in this clubhouse and it's a fun team. So, I feel like we say that every year, but this year's a little bit different in a way."

To Woodruff's point, Milwaukee has won 60 of its first 100 games with a very different roster than the one that won the National League Central last year. Shortstop Willy Adames (San Francisco Giants) and right-hander Corbin Burnes (Arizona Diamondbacks) both signed massive contracts elsewhere this offseason. Long-time closer Devin Williams, meanwhile, was traded to the New York Yankees in December. Their departures, though, have hardly hindered the Brewers.

Even though Woodruff missed most of the first half as a result of being brought along slowly following surgery on his pitching shoulder, Milwaukee's rotation has been stout in his absence. Brewers starters have combined for the sixth-low-

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est ERA in the majors, thanks in part to shrewd pickups like right-hander Quinn Priester, whom Milwaukee acquired in April.

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