

IN FRAME

ENTERTAINMENT MONDAY • 1C

Does this rom-com live up to the hype?

TIMES LEADER

118 YEARS STRONG

Monday, January 19, 2026 | BREAKING NEWS AT TIMESLEADER.COM | Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania • $1.50

County reports monthly personnel report

Luzerne County government hired seven workers in December and rehired one past employee, according to the newly posted monthly personnel report.

Four new workers were hired as 911 telecommunicators at $19.35 per hour, it said: Megan Britt, Donald E. Griffiths Jr., Erica Hontz, and Heather Kosicki.

The other three new employees, their positions, and hourly compensation: Michael Perlock, Aging Agency care manager 2, $21.18; Cara Phillips, part-time human services assistant solicitor, $28.99; and Coady Skelley, assessor's real property field investigator, $14.41.

Prior employee Neil Murphy was rehired as a part-time airport police officer at the District Attorney's Office at $25 per hour.



Jennifer Learn-Andes
Luzerne County Notebook

Transfers

Four employees changed positions through the internal merit hiring process, the report said.

These workers, their new positions, and hourly compensation: Skyler Davis, part-time 911 call taker, $19.11; Amy Haydu, court judicial assistant, $24.18; Francis O'Looney, Children, Youth and Families caseworker 1, $20.91; and Jacqueline Silveri, court executive secretary, $30.32.

Departures

Four workers retired in December, it said: Barbara Lumley, magisterial district judge secretary; Victoria Paisley, court judicial assistant; Marie Rondinella, Aging Agency clerk 2; and Patrick Dooley, planning and zoning planner 2.

There were seven resignations last month: Robert Richard Dudick, boiler plant mechanical systems engineer; Thomas Kundrat, engineering department facilities/maintenance project manager; Eileen Link, Aging Agency clerk typist 2; Coreen Milazzo, election administrative assistant; Robert Peter Sheils III, part-time assistant public defender; Jeffrey Bennett, information technology analyst; and Rachel Spivak, assistant district attorney.

Council appointments

County Council members selected colleagues to serve on several boards last week.

See REPORT | 2A

MLK DAY

Bernice King sees a 'saving grace'

By Kate Brumback
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Against a backdrop of political division and upheaval, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s daughter said the holiday honoring her father's legacy comes as "somewhat of a saving grace" this year.

"I say that because it inserts a sense of sanity and morality into our very troubling climate right now," the Rev. Bernice King said in an interview with The Associated Press. "With everything going on, the one thing that I think Dr. King reminds people of is hope and the ability to challenge injustice and inhumanity."

The holiday comes as President Donald Trump is about to mark the first anniversary of his second term in office on Tuesday. The "three evils" — poverty, racism and militarism — that the civil rights leader identified in a 1967 speech as threats to a democratic society "are very present and manifesting through a lot of what's happening" under Trump's leadership, Bernice King said.

King, CEO of the King Center in Atlanta, cited efforts to roll back diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives; directives to scrub key parts of history from government websites and remove "improper ideology" from Smithsonian museums; and immigration enforcement operations in multiple cities that

See KING | 2A



AP Photo

Bernice King speaks during an interview Wednesday in Atlanta.



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Cassandra Coleman, executive director at America250PA, asked the audience to hold up America250PA signs so she could get a photo at the conclusion of the kickoff event Sunday at the Luzerne County Courthouse.

CELEBRATING 250 YEARS

America250PA officials visit Luzerne County

By Fred Adams
For Times Leader

Officials kicked off America250PA celebrations for the United States' semiquincentennial Sunday evening at the Luzerne County Courthouse.

During the 13-day tour, Cassandra Coleman, America250PA executive director, and other officials will travel to all 67 counties, hosting ceremonies that recognize each county's unique history, local partnerships, and ongoing role in the Commonwealth's semiquincentennial celebration.

Sunday's ceremony in Luzerne County marked day three of the celebrations.



Fred Adams | For Times Leader

Cassandra Coleman, executive director at America250PA, opens the event at the Lzerne County Courthouse Sunday evening.

Issue 2026-019

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

What's your take on the latest news?
Go to www.facebook.com/timesleader
to share your thoughts.

A NEWS
Local: 3A
Opinion: 7A
Nation/World: 12A
Health/Science: 14A
Weather: 18A

OBITUARIES
Holmberg, Jeffrey Miles
Tuberion, Brian J. Sr.
Watkins, Arthur Fredrick Jr.
5A

PIERCE STREET DELI

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Catering

570-283-DELI (3354) • 517 Pierce St., Kingston, PA 18704

We Deliver!

Daily Specials

Apple Harvest Salad.....$10.99
Strawberry Salad.....$10.99
Asiago Turkey Club.....$8.99
Chicken Bruschetta.....$8.99
Pretzel Sandwich:.....$8.99
C.C. Bleu.....$9.99
McCarthy.....$9.99
Baja.....$9.99

Mac & Cheese with stewed Tomatoes.....$7.95
Cranberry Walnut Chicken Salad Sandwich..... $9.95
(SEASONAL) "GOBBLER".....$10.99
Buffalo Mac n Cheese.....$11.99

Breakfast Special daily!
2 Eggs, Bacon, Toast, & Home Fries.....$5.39

‘60 Minutes’ airs report on Trump deportations

It was suddenly pulled a month ago

By David Bauder
The Associated Press



AP File Photo

As prisoners stand looking out from a cell, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem speaks during a tour of the Terrorism Confinement Center in Tecoluca, El Salvador, on March 26, 2025.

“60 Minutes” on Sunday aired its story about Trump administration deportations that was abruptly pulled from the newsmagazine’s lineup a month ago, a move that had triggered an internal battle about political pressure that spilled out into the open.

Correspondent Sharyn Alfonsi made no reference to her dispute with CBS News editor-in-chief Bari Weiss in the story about deportees who had been sent to El Salvador’s notoriously harsh CECOT prison. When the segment was struck from the Dec. 21 episode on Weiss’s orders, Alfonsi told her “60 Minutes” colleagues that it “was not an editorial decision, it was a political one.”

Weiss had argued that the story did not sufficiently reflect the administration’s viewpoint or advance reporting that had been done by other news organizations earlier.

The story shown on Sunday included no on-camera interviews with Trump administration officials. But it did include statements from the White House and Department of Homeland Security that were not part of what Alfonsi had used before her story was pulled. Some of the statements, which were carried in full on the “60 Minutes” website, were dated prior to Dec. 21.

“Since November, ‘60 Minutes’ has made several attempts to interview key Trump administration officials on camera about our story,” Alfonsi said. “They declined our requests.”

Alfonsi did not immediately return a message from The Associated Press on Sunday. She said in her email that the administration’s refusal to consent to on-camera interviews was a tactical maneuver designed to kill the story.

CBS says it was always going to air the piece

CBS News, in a statement, said that its “leadership has always been committed to airing the’ 60 Minutes’ CECOT piece as soon as it was ready. Tonight, viewers get to see it, along with other important stories, all of which speak to CBS News’ independence and the power of our storytelling.”

Alfonsi’s report was the second of three on Sunday’s show, with the lead story being Cecilia Vega’s report from Minneapolis about ICE enforcement efforts and the protests to its tactics.

The initial decision to sideline Alfonsi’s CECOT story became a flashpoint for critics who said the appointment of Weiss, founder of the Free Press website, who had no previous experience in television news, represented an attempt by the network’s new corporate leadership to curry favor with Trump.

While pulled from the broadcast in December, Alfonsi’s original story mistakenly became available online. CBS News had fed a version of the newsmagazine to Global Television, a network that airs “60 Minutes” in Canada, which posted it on its website before the last-minute switch removing the piece.

That enabled sharp-eyed viewers to see what Weiss had rejected, offering the opportunity to compare it to what “60 Minutes” eventually put on the air.

The body of the story was unchanged. It included a brief clip of President Donald Trump saying the prison operators “don’t play games,” and one from White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt saying that “heinous monsters, rapists, murderers, sexual assaulters, predators who have no right to be in this country” were sent there.

Alfonsi’s introduction was updated to lead with the Jan. 3 U.S. raid that led to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, currently held in U.S. custody. She changed the end of the story to include the administration comment, including its explanation for not providing detailed records on the migrants sent to El Salvador.

The administration also provided photos of tattoos worn by the two migrants Alfonsi interviewed, including one swastika that the interviewee said he had gotten as a teenager, not knowing what it meant.

The CBS-administration relationship has evolved

Since Weiss’ appointment, Trump administration officials have been more visible on CBS News, in interviews that she sometimes helped arrange. The president himself was interviewed by Norah O’Donnell on “60 Minutes” on Nov. 2.

The New York Times reported Saturday that after Trump was interviewed last week by new “CBS Evening News” anchor Tony Dokoupil, Leavitt told the network that “we’ll sue your ass off” if the exchange wasn’t aired in full.

All of the 13-minute interview was shown Tuesday, an unusual step for one of the broadcast networks’ evening newscasts, a half-hour summary of the day’s big stories. CBS told The Times that it had decided to run the interview unedited at the time it was booked.

Trump has objected in the past to how his interviews have been edited — including releasing an unedited transcript of an interview conducted by Lesley Stahl of “60 Minutes” in 2020.

King

From page 1A

have turned violent and resulted in the separation of families.

“Everything President Trump does is in the best interest of the American people,” White House spokesperson Davis Ingle said in an email. “That includes rolling back harmful DEI agendas, deporting dangerous criminal illegal aliens from American communities, or ensuring we are being honest about our country’s great history.”

Maya Wiley, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, one of the nation’s oldest and largest civil rights coalitions, said King’s words “ring more true today.”

“We’re at a period in our history where we literally have a regime actively working to erase the Civil Rights movement,” she said. “This has been an administration dismantling intentionally and with ideological fervor every advancement we have made since the Civil War.”

Wiley also recalled that King warned that “the prospect of war abroad was undermining to the beloved community globally and it was taking away from the ability for us to take care of all our people.” Trump’s administration has engaged in military strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats and captured Venezuela’s president in a surprise raid earlier this month.

Bernice King said she’s not sure what her father would make of the United States today, nearly six decades after his assassination.

“He’s not here. It’s a different world,” she said. “But what I can say is his teachings transcend time and he taught us, I think, the way to address injustice through his nonviolent philosophy and methodology.”

Nonviolence should be embraced not just by those who are protesting and fighting against what they believe are injustices, but should also be adopted by immigration agents and other law enforcement officers, she said. To that end, she added, the King Center previously developed a curriculum that it now plans to redevelop to help officers see that they can carry out their duties while also respecting people’s humanity.

Even amid the “troubling climate” in the country right now, Bernice King said there is no question that “we have made so much progress as a nation.” The civil rights movement that her parents helped lead brought more people into mainstream politics who have sensitivity and compassion, she said. Despite efforts to scrap DEI initiatives and the deportation of people from around the world, “the inevitability is we’re so far into our diversity you can’t put that back in a box,” she said.

To honor her father’s legacy this year, she urged people to look inward.

“I think we spend a lot of time looking at everybody else and what everybody else is not doing or doing, and we’re looking out the window at all the problems of the world and talking about how bad they are and we don’t spend a lot of time on ourselves personally,” she said.

King endorsed participation in service projects to observe the holiday because they foster connection, sensitize people to the struggles of others and help us to understand each other better. But she said people should also look at what they can do in the year to come to further her father’s teachings.

“I think we have the opportunity to use this as a measuring point from year to year in terms of what we’re doing to move our society in a more just, humane, equitable and peaceful way,” she said.

TIMES LEADER
(USPS 499710) • Publishes 365 Days a Year
90 E. Market St., Wilkes-Barre, PA, 18701
Periodical postage paid at Wilkes-Barre, PA
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Times Leader, 90 E. Market St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Closed Sat. & Sun.
Main Number: 570.829.7100
Classified Advertising: 570.829.7130
Newsroom: 570.829.7242
Obituaries: 570.991.6119
MISSED PAPER? CALL: 570-829-5000

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS
All 7-day home delivered subscriptions include 4 days delivery of the printed product directly to the home and 3 days delivery of the digital edition directly to any laptop, personal computer, phone or tablet.
All subscriptions, regardless of term are NON-REFUNDABLE but can be cancelled at any time. No credit is given for vacation periods of any length but the subscription value of that period can be donated to the Newspaper-In-Education (NIE) Program.

SPECIAL EDITIONS
All home delivered subscriptions include delivery of one SPECIAL EDITION, THANKSGIVING DAY at a price of $4.00, which offsets printing and delivery costs for this SPECIAL EDITION.
Subscribers can OPT OUT of this SPECIAL EDITION by calling customer service at (570) 829-5000 at least 7 days in advance of the publication day. If the subscriber elects to not OPT OUT, the cost of the subscription will not change but the length of the term will be adjusted.

PRICING
All future prices are subject to change at any time without notice.

CONTACT THE TIMES LEADER



Kerry Miscavage
Publisher
570-704-3953
kmiscavage@timesleader.com



Jake Higgins
Executive Editor
570-991-6393
jhiggins@timesleader.com



Diane McGee
Advertising Director
570-704-3955
dmcgee@timesleader.com



Liz Baumeister
News Editor
570-704-3989
lbaumeister@timesleader.com

Report

From page 1A

Councilwoman Patty Krushnowski was appointed to a council seat on the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors.

Council Vice Chairwoman Brittany Stephenson was selected for the Wilkes-Barre Riverfront Parks Committee.

Councilman Chris Belles was chosen to serve on the county Retirement Board, which oversees the employee pension fund.

As the new Council Chairman, Jimmy Sabatino also serves on the Retirement Board and the Bi-County Airport Board, unless he chooses to name a council designee in his place.

Sabatino announced he is appointing Councilman John Lombardo as his designee on the Retirement Board and Belles as his designee on the Bi-County Airport Board.

Councilwoman LeeAnn McDermott will remain on the Bi-County Airport Board because she has two years remaining in her appointed term.

Sabatino was also appointed as the council representative on the Greater Hazleton CAN DO Board of Directors last week.

Board appointments

Council appointed citizens to two boards last week: Conservation District, Tracey Chonko and Thomas Herbert; and Planning Commission, Peter Mikitish.

County Council is expected to appoint citizens to numerous vacant board seats at its next regular meeting on Jan. 27.

Citizen applicants must complete a public interview to be placed on the eligibility list for appointment consideration.

Council’s Authorities, Boards and Commissions Committee is scheduled to hold a public session to interview additional applicants at 5 p.m. Tuesday in the county courthouse on River Street in Wilkes-Barre. A link for the remote meeting attendance option will be posted in the council’s online public meetings section at luzernecounty.org.

Reach Jennifer Learn-Andes at 570-991-6388 or on X @ TLJenLearnAndes.



Tony Callaio file photo | For Times Leader

City of Pittston official, Sharon Sworen, far right, took part in volunteering in the very first food distribution at the Pittston Memorial Library's Cosgrove Room in December 2025.

City of Pittston to hold second food pantry distribution

By Tony Callaio
For Times Leader

PITTSTON — The City of Pittston Office of Community Development, in partnership with the CEO Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank and the Downtown Pittston Partnership, is offering the Pittston City Food Distribution Pantry on Thursday, Jan. 22.

Pittston residents are invited to go to the Pittston Memorial Library's Cosgrove Room, located at 47 Broad St., between 4 and 6 p.m.

The monthly food distribution program is designed to help meet the growing nutritional needs of residents.

Each month, participants will have access to free pantry staples, fresh produce, meats, and additional items aimed at supporting local households.

Residents planning to attend are encouraged to pre-register at https://tinyurl.com/mwcdzzye.

According to Mary Kroptavich, to help ensure a smooth and efficient experience, please follow the arrival instructions below:

- Enter from Main Street into the Lower Tomato Festival Lot.
- Cross Spring Street into the Upper Tomato Festival Lot.
- Follow the Art Loop Trail to the library and turn right into the parking lot behind the building.
- Once inside, stop in to complete your forms and shop the pantry.

When finished, please return to your vehicle, turn right when exiting the lot, and exit via Broad Street.

"We encourage everyone to dress warmly, as temperatures are anticipated to be very cold," Kroptavich said. "Kindly do not park in front of the library, as that area is reserved for strip mall parking and library guests only."

Future Pittston City Food Distribution Pantry distributions will take place on:

- Thursday, Feb. 26 — 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Mar. 26 — 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

HANOVER TWP.

Man wanted on attempted homicide charges

Staff Report



Cham

HANOVER TWP. — Police in Hanover Township obtained an arrest warrant for Yerro Pa Cham, 19, charging him with criminal attempt to commit criminal homicide after a shooting in Newtown early Sunday morning.

Police allege Cham discharged a round into an occupied structure and fled the scene at approximately 4 a.m. Police did not say if anyone was injured in the shooting.

Cham is also charged with two counts each of aggravated assault and reckless endangerment, and one count each of discharge of a firearm into an occupied structure and terroristic threats.

Cham is described by police as a black male, 6 feet 2 inches tall, with brown hair and brown eyes.

Anyone with information about Cham's whereabouts is asked to call Hanover Township Police at 570-825-1254 or 911.

City of Pittston receives state funds to improve traffic lights

By Tony Callaio
For Times Leader

PITTSTON — Gov. Josh Shapiro announced a program to invest nearly $30 million into municipal traffic signal upgrades to enhance safety and improve traffic flow across Pennsylvania.

The Shapiro administration is providing funding to 57 municipalities across 24 counties in the Commonwealth, including the City of Pittston, for the Green Light-Go Program.

Pittston will receive $38,640 to modernize traffic signal detection and control technology at key intersections along Broad St., Water St., and Main St., three of the city's most heavily traveled corridors.

The project will replace outdated pavement induction loop systems with advanced video-based vehicle detection technology.

Cameras mounted on traffic signals will identify vehicles in real time and communicate directly with traffic signal controllers, allowing signals to adjust dynamically based on actual traffic demand rather than fixed timing schedules.

The upgrades will improve traffic flow and reduce congestion, enhance safety for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists, increase signal efficiency and reliability, and reduce long-term maintenance costs associated with aging infrastructure.

"Under Gov. Shapiro's leadership, our top priority is serving the people of our Commonwealth by improving the services that make a real difference in Pennsylvanians' lives," said PA Dept. of Transportation (PennDOT) secretary and Avoca native, Mike Carroll. "The safety improvements supported by the Green Light-Go program will help municipalities reduce congestion, improve traffic flow, and keep Pennsylvanians moving safely and efficiently. I'm proud that PennDOT continues to partner with communities to deliver real results."

"By investing in modern, responsive traffic signal technology, the City of Pittston continues its commitment to safer streets, smarter infrastructure, and a more efficient transportation network for residents and visitors alike," Pittston Mayor Michael Lombardo said.



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

Through the PA Green-Go Program initiative by Gov. Shapiro, Pittston will receive $38,640 to modernize traffic signal detection and control technology at key intersections along Broad St., Water St., and Main St., three of the city's most heavily traveled corridors.



Bill O'Boyle

Beyond the Byline

Phil, Mr. Toma, and potholes

Feb. 2 is just two weeks away, and you know what that means — a rodent will tell us whether the winter will be gone soon and be extended for six more weeks.

Baloney.

Punxsutawney Phil, that furry groundhog who somehow has been designated as the state's foremost weather forecaster, will again offer his weather prediction.

Hogwash.

Do you know that Punxsutawney Phil — the weather rodent and his predecessors dating back 130-plus years — has compiled a 39% accuracy rate for predicting the weather? Not very impressive.

You'd have a better chance of being correct if you flipped a coin — 50-50.

Phil's handlers — the Inner Circle of Gobbler's Knob — actually decide in advance whether Phil will see his shadow during his appearance before the cameras.

Talk about a dog and rodent show!

Who can verify if a groundhog really can see its shadow? And, assuming it's possible, how do these handlers know if he does or doesn't see it?

According to History.com, Groundhog Day, featuring a rodent meteorologist, was celebrated for the first time on Feb. 2, 1887, at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney.

It appears those Inner Circle members have come up with quite a promotion here. They've managed to make believers of some of us — some are upset if Phil sees his shadow, and others are delighted when they tell us he didn't see it, and spring is on its way.

Mr. Toma's birthday

If you want to celebrate something far more joyous, know that Feb. 2 is George Toma's birthday. The Edwardsville native will be 97 this year.

Mr. Toma headed up field preparations for every Super Bowl from 1967 to 2023 — an amazing record.

He is affectionately known as "The Sod God, "Nitty Gritty Dirt Man," and the "Sodfather," and he has written books and tutored nearly every groundskeeper for almost every major sports team and facility.

Mr. Toma never forgot where he came from — he still refers to his hometown as "The Valley With A Heart" and he wants people back home to know he thinks of them often.

"I want all of Wyoming Valley to know that their fingerprints are on every Super Bowl field I prepared," Mr. Toma always said.

Mr. Toma learned his trade at Artillery Park in Kingston under the tutelage of his Edwardsville neighbor, Stan Scheckler, when Toma was a high school teenager. That knowledge sent him on a storied career as a groundskeeper.

Mr. Toma has lived in Kansas City since 1957, after growing up on Swallow Street in Edwardsville. His father died when he was 10. Scheckler, who lived across the street from the Tomas, worked as a groundskeeper for the Wilkes-Barre Barons of the Class A Eastern League.

Scheckler took the young Toma under his wing, and Toma watched, listened, and worked hard, learning his trade. In 1946, Toma became head groundskeeper at Artillery Park. He held the position until 1950, when he entered the military and went to Korea. He returned in 1953 to find no baseball at Artillery — Wilkes-Barre had lost its franchise to Reading.

Mr. Toma can recall moments from every Super Bowl that he worked at. He talks about legendary people like Lamar Hunt, former AFL commissioner, and Pete Rozelle, the NFL commissioner who, with Hunt, forged the merger of the two leagues, thereby creating the Super Bowl.

For Mr. Toma, though, it all leads back to Edwardsville and the railroad tracks he walked along to reach Artillery Park.

When the AFL and NFL merged, Rozelle held a news conference in Kansas City. He was asked what the difference was between the two leagues. Toma remembers Rozelle saying he didn't see much difference in the caliber of play between the two

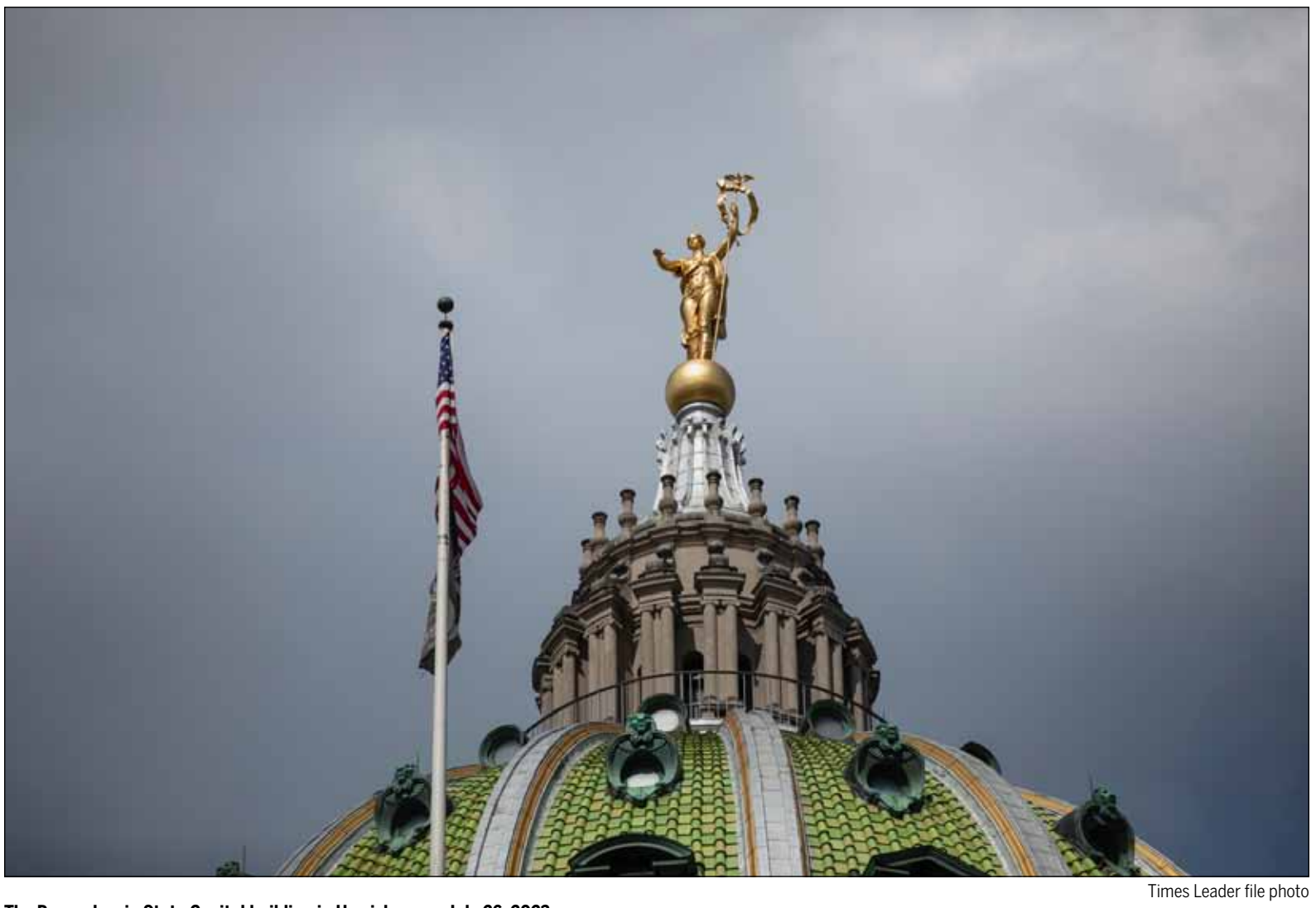
See BYLINE | 4A



LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Treasurer: New tax appeal process is a success

By Bill O'Boyle
boboyle@timesleader.com



Times Leader file photo

The Pennsylvania State Capitol building in Harrisburg on July 26, 2023.

Pennsylvania Treasurer Stacy Garrity announced this week that the success of the Board of Finance & Revenue's (BF&R) new tax appeal and mediated settlement process, which started in 2025.

"This past year was the first that granted a longer timeline for submission and provided an option for mediated settlements to resolve tax disputes, and it was a success for BF&R and Pennsylvania taxpayers," Garrity said. "These changes remove red tape and make Pennsylvania more business-friendly."



Garrity

The new timeline and mediation offering went into effect on Jan. 27, 2025, in accordance with Act 123 of 2024, which amended the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

Due to the increased timeline to file certain personal income tax (PIT) appeals to 90 days (previously 60), as of Dec. 31, 2025, BF&R was able to decide appeals in 154 cases based on merits, rather than dismissing them for jurisdiction reasons. In addition to the more consumer-friendly timeline for filing an appeal, BF&R can grant a 30-day extension if good cause is shown.

The law also extended timelines for filing applicable cases through the Board of Appeals at the Department of Revenue, resulting in BF&R receiving 141 fewer PIT appeals with filing deadline issues.

There were 55 taxpayer requests and BF&R recommendations for mediation as of Dec. 31, 2025. Of these, 45% resulted in an amicable resolution between the taxpayer and the Department of Revenue. Mediated settlement is a no-cost option for taxpayers that increases efficiency.

BF&R has seen an overall reduction in appeals to the Commonwealth Court, from 457 in 2024 to 378 in 2025.

"The improvements from Act 123 are easy to quantify, and it's a winning solution for taxpayers, businesses, and state government that saves both time and money," Garrity said.

Act 123 was supported by numerous organizations, including the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, the NFIB, and the Pennsylvania Society of Enrolled Agents.

"The goals of Act 123 were to streamline the process of resolving tax disputes in Pennsylvania, provide flexibility to resolve disputes fairly and efficiently, and help job creators avoid costly litigation," said Luke Bernstein, president and CEO, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry. "The initial results show positive movement in all directions, which has helped to improve Pennsylvania's competitiveness for business investments. We're thankful for Treasurer Garrity and her office's efforts to shepherd these important reforms through completion."

For information about BF&R and the tax appeal process, visit patreasury.gov/bfr.

Legislation introduced to cap credit card late fees

U.S. Sen. John Fetterman, D-PA; U.S. Sen. Cory Booker, D-NJ; and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-WI, this week introduced the Credit Card Fairness Act — legislation that would put into statute the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's popular $8 cap on credit card late fees.

Consumers pay $14 billion in credit card late fees each year, which pads the profits of the biggest banks. The standard $30 to $41 late fee is up to five times the cost to banks of collecting late payments, allowing banks to profit from customers who are struggling to make ends meet.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau previously enacted a rule capping these fees at $8, but it was stalled in litigation brought by the big banks. This legislation would codify the $8 cap in law.



Fetterman



Booker



Baldwin

"Big banks profiteering off people by charging $41 for a single late credit card payment is absolutely wrong," Fetterman said. "At a time when people are struggling to get by, these late fees are only doing more harm. This legislation will protect hardworking Americans from predatory fees, and I'll work with anyone to get this over the finish line."

"American consumers shouldn't be hit with predatory late fees that are three to five times higher than the actual cost of collection," Booker said.

"As costs continue to skyrocket under this administration — from groceries, to housing, to health care — Wisconsin families are already stretched thin," Baldwin said. "The last thing they need is big banks and credit card companies gouging them with credit card late fees that make it harder to stay afloat, let alone get ahead."

See ROUNDUP | 5A

BOARD OF PARDONS

Shapiro pick for vacancy opposed by advocates

By Danielle Ohl
For Spotlight PA

HARRISBURG — Gov. Josh Shapiro's nomination to the Board of Pardons is a psychiatrist and attorney who has for decades acted as a hired expert witness in high-profile cases.

Shapiro nominated John S. O'Brien II to fill the vacancy left when psychiatrist John Williams' term expired in November. Two Republican-controlled state Senate committees will review O'Brien's nomination before the full chamber votes to approve or deny the appointment.

"The Shapiro administration is confident that Dr. John O'Brien II will serve the Board of Pardons well," said spokesperson Alex Peterson in an emailed statement.

A request for comment from O'Brien was not returned as of publication.

As a member of the Board of Pardons, O'Brien would help make the ultimate decision on both commutation and pardon applications from people who seek to either shorten a prison sentence or wipe clean a criminal history.

A supporter of O'Brien told Spotlight PA the doctor is "extremely intelligent" and "deeply knowledgeable about mental health issues."

But clemency advocates and criminal defense attorneys who spoke with Spotlight PA expressed concerns about O'Brien, who has been involved in at least one case that is currently before the board.

The state Senate returns on Jan. 26 and will have 25 session days to confirm the nomination. If the Senate does not confirm the nomination within 25 session days, O'Brien will take the office as if he had been confirmed.

About Spotlight PA
Spotlight PA is an independent, nonpartisan, and nonprofit newsroom producing investigative and public-service journalism that holds power to account and drives positive change in Pennsylvania.

Frequent expert

O'Brien earned his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in 1979 and his law degree from Georgetown University in 1986, according to a curriculum vitae Shapiro provided to the state Senate. He spent more than 20 years as teaching faculty at Jefferson and has served as a staff psychiatrist at hospitals throughout the Philadelphia area.

He is currently on staff at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia and serves as a psychiatrist on the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas mental health unit, where he does competency assessments.

Outside of his work as a clinician and academic, O'Brien has made a career as a hired expert witness in criminal cases, including the trials of Penn State football coach Jerry Sandusky and chemical company heir John du Pont.

Spotlight PA reviewed newspaper archives that showed O'Brien's involvement in dozens of criminal cases across the state as far back as 1987, when he testified for the defense that Lehigh University student Josoph Henry was experiencing a rare reaction to alcohol when he raped and killed a classmate.

Newspaper reports from the time of the cases cite O'Brien was paid anywhere from $300 to $450 an hour for his expertise.

In 1996, the state hired O'Brien to assess du Pont, who a jury later convicted of killing Olympic wrestler David Schultz in a case that drew national attention. O'Brien did not find a clear diagnosis for du Pont, but attributed his psychosis to cocaine use and testified he was sane at the time of the murder. The court ultimately threw out du Pont's insanity defense, and the jury found him guilty but mentally ill.

In 2012, O'Brien testified in the Sandusky case, arguing the former football coach could not have suffered from histrionic personality disorder, as the defense presented, because he was "extremely high functioning over the years."

O'Brien has also been involved in several cases involving children and has frequently argued that the accused minors cannot be rehabilitated and should be charged as adults.

In one case, O'Brien testified that 11-year-old Jordan Brown would not benefit from rehabilitation in the juvenile justice system because he would not admit to committing the crime when the two spoke. The Pennsylvania Superior Court later threw out O'Brien's testimony and overturned the court's decision to try Brown as an adult, citing a violation of his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned Brown's entire conviction in 2018, citing shoddy evidence.

O'Brien was also involved in the trial of Jamie Silvonek, who was 14 years old when she admitted involvement in her mother's murder. O'Brien testified that Silvonek was mature beyond her years, manipulative, and would not benefit from rehabilitation through the juvenile system. The court agreed and tried Silvonek as an adult.

Silvonek is now seeking a commutation from the Board of Pardons, where she will need unanimous consent.

"The administration will ask Dr. O'Brien to commit to recusing himself from cases in which he had direct involvement or served as a witness," Shapiro spokesperson Peterson said.

See SHAPIRO | 5A

Byline

From page 3A

leagues. But he did say he had never seen a more beautiful playing field than the one in Kansas City.

That was Toma's field with fingerprints from Wyoming Valley.

Happy Birthday, Mr. Toma.

One last word about potholes

It's pothole season again, and they can wreak havoc on motorists every day.

Cars, trucks, buses, they all find the potholes. Driving along and... BANG! — You get jarred. Sometimes you lose a tire. Sometimes you need a wheel alignment. Sometimes your head hurts from hitting the roof of your car.

If you are alert, which is doubtful since most drivers are too busy texting or dialing their cell phones, you can swerve to avoid the pothole. It does happen. Just hope the oncoming vehicle in the pothole-free lane is not texting.

Potholes have been around forever. They are always on the municipal DPW to-do list.

If you see a pothole or hit one, report it.

Apparently, in this high-tech world we live in, we can send people into space, we can cook food in a fraction of the time as we used to, and we can produce a phone that takes pictures, accesses the Internet, and keeps us "connected" — yet we can't find a way to fix potholes permanently.

Potholes, apparently, can never be fully repaired.

In the meantime, be careful.

WATKINS

Arthur "Fred" Fredrick Watkins Jr., 83, formerly of Forty Fort, passed away Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026. Family and friends may visit from 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday at Hugh B. Hughes & Son Funeral Home, 1044 Wyoming Ave., Forty Fort. Condolences may be shared at www.hughbhughes.com.

TUBERION

Brian J. Tuberion Sr., of Mountain Top, passed away Dec. 31, 2025, after a hard-fought battle with cancer. Friends are invited to join the family from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday at Desiderio-Lehman Funeral & Cremation, 436 S. Mountain Blvd., Mountain Top, with a memorial service at 5 p.m.

HOLMBERG

Jeffrey Miles Holmberg, of White Haven, passed away Friday, Jan. 16, 2026. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday in White Haven United Methodist Church, 900 Buffalo St., White Haven. Visitation will be held from 10 a.m. to service time. Arrangements are by Lehman Family Funeral Service Inc., White Haven.

OBITUARY POLICY

• The Times Leader publishes limited obituaries for free.

• Paid obituaries may include full history and photo.

• Please send obituaries as a word document or regular email and photos in jpg format.

• Obituaries for children age 12 or younger are free of charge.

• Private parties must include funeral home, cremation place, or death certificate information.

• Send information to **obits@timesleader.com** or fax to our new number, **570-300-1886.**

• An obituary clerk will confirm receipt to sender via email or phone.

• If you don't receive a confirmation, please call **570-991-6119.**

• **Deadline:** 7:30 p.m. for next day publication.

COMING FUNERALS

BUBBLO — Irene: Funeral, 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Bednarski Funeral Home, Wyoming. Mass, 10 a.m., St. Monica Parish, West Wyoming. Viewing, 5 to 8 p.m. Monday, funeral home.

DOUGHER — Ann: Funeral, 9:15 a.m. Wednesday, John V. Morris Family Funeral Home Inc., Wilkes-Barre. Mass, 10 a.m., St. Nicholas-St. Mary Parish, Wilkes-Barre. Visitation, 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, funeral home.

EMMERT — Richard: Mass, 10 a.m. Wednesday, Holy Family Parish, Luzerne. Visitation, 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Harold C. Snowdon Funeral Home Inc., Shavertown.

ISBITSKI — Peter: Funeral, 11 a.m. Monday, Curtis L. Swanson Funeral Home Inc., Pikes Creek. Visitation, 10 a.m. to service time.

KINDLER — Elaine Visitation, 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Harold C. Snowdon Funeral Home Inc., Shavertown

KOCHER — Audrey: Funeral, 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Andrew Strish Funeral Home, Larksville. Mass, 10 a.m., All Saints Parish Church, Plymouth. Visitation, 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday; 9 a.m. to service time Thursday.

LAMONT — Linda: Memorial service and celebration of her life, noon Saturday, Harman Funeral Homes & Crematory Inc., Drums. Visitation, 10 a.m. to service time.

LETOSKI — Frank: Visitation, noon to 2 p.m. Monday, Harold C. Snowdon Funeral Home Inc., Shavertown. Memorial service to follow.

O'NEILL — Thomas: Visitation, 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Harold C. Snowdon Funeral Home Inc., Shavertown.

ROKE — Genevieve: Mass, 11 a.m. Saturday, St. Faustina Kowalska Parish, Nanticoke. Visitation, 10 a.m. to service time.

SCHMOYER — Ronald: Funeral, 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Desiderio-Lehman Funeral and Cremation, Mountain Top. Mass, 11 a.m., St. Jude Church, Mountain Top. Visitation, 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday; 9:30 a.m. to service time Thursday.

SHANAHAN — Thomas: Visitation, 2 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, E. Blake Collins Funeral Home, Wilkes-Barre. Memorial service, 3:30 p.m., followed by military honors.

YALE — Dawn: Visitation, 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Hugh B. Hughes & Son Inc. Funeral Home, Forty Fort. Celebration of life, 6 p.m.

Shapiro

From page 4A



Amanda Berg | For Spotlight PA

The Pennsylvania Capitol in Harrisburg.

Differing views

The Board of Pardons considers commutation and pardon applications from people who want to either shorten a prison sentence or clear their criminal record.

The board comprises two elected officials, the attorney general and lieutenant governor, and three political appointees — a corrections expert; a medical doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist; and a victim advocate.

Applications the board deems "meritorious" are given a public hearing, after which the body votes to either deny the application or approve it for the governor's consideration.

While pardons are recommended by the board in a majority vote, life sentence commutations, which allow a person to get out of prison, require unanimous approval — just one no vote dooms an application.

Edward McCann, a Montgomery County prosecutor who has worked extensively with O'Brien, told Spotlight PA the doctor is "extremely intelligent" and "deeply knowledgeable about mental health issues and defenses." The two have presented on overcoming mental health defenses at an annual conference for homicide prosecutors four times since 2017, according to O'Brien's resume.

"I believe that he'll certainly be fair and impartial and give people that consideration," McCann said of O'Brien's ability to consider clemency applicants. "In many ways, I think he's very in tune with what mental health issues can do to someone if untreated, and if someone does get treatment, how it can be transformative for them."

Clemency advocates and criminal defense attorneys who spoke with Spotlight PA, however, expressed concern about O'Brien's work as a hired expert for prosecutors, particularly in juvenile cases.

Keisha Hudson, Philadelphia's chief public defender, said O'Brien is a known "wind-up expert" for prosecutors who seek to dismiss mental health defenses.

In her work on death penalty cases, her office has gathered extensive mitigating evidence on behalf of their clients — including neuropsychological tests, brain scans, analysis of any childhood traumas — and "time after time after time again, Dr. O'Brien would come in and question and challenge and say there's nothing wrong," Hudson said.

"I'm a little alarmed that this would be the governor's nominee," she said. "He will be doing the same on the pardon board. He's going to be assessing with that eye, and the eye is prosecutorial, which is not what we need on the pardons board."

Bret Grote, legal director of the Abolitionist Law Center, called the nomination unacceptable. "Any mental health professional who professes that children cannot be rehabilitated is the 20th and 21st century equivalent of those who believed in phrenology," he said.

Since 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court has issued a number of opinions that reexamined whether children can be fully culpable for their crimes and ruled out severe, mandatory sentences for children, such as the death penalty and life without parole.

The opinions rely on neuroscience that shows children and young adults are "not only capable of rehabilitation and profound change, but that is developmentally to be expected," said Grote.

Many of the applicants before the Board of Pardons seek forgiveness for crimes committed in their teens and early 20s, Grote said, and they need to be given a review that looks at the entirety of their situation at the time.

"If someone thinks personality can be fixed when they are children, it calls into question whether that individual — in this case, a mental health professional — can get over that bias," Grote said.

What's next

Two state Senate committees — Judiciary and Rules and Executive Nominations — will assess O'Brien before referring the nomination to the full chamber for a vote.

State Sen. Camera Bartolotta, R-Beaver, is on both committees, and has been a vocal advocate for criminal justice reform. Reached shortly after Shapiro sent the nomination to the Senate, Bartolotta declined to comment specifically on O'Brien as a candidate.

But she said she'd like whoever assumes the role to be someone who understands a decades-old case might have a different outcome if tried today.

"We know so much more about psychological profiles and all kinds of issues," Bartolotta said, including the effects of abuse, substance use disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. "That plays a big role with someone when they make an incredibly awful decision."

In pardons cases in particular, Bartolotta said, applicants want to move forward with their lives. She hopes the new board member can be clear-eyed about Pennsylvania's overly punitive history, and give people who are decades-removed from nonviolent crimes a chance to live unencumbered by a criminal record.

"When is the reparation complete? When do we say enough?" she said. "When can you stand on your own two feet, when does the punishment stop?"

Per the current calendar, the state Senate will have until June to act on the nomination, but Bartolotta said she hopes the senate will act quickly.

"This is something that needs to be done," Bartolotta said. "We can't go too long without a full five-member pardons board. Hopefully, we'll address this with the urgency it deserves."

BEFORE YOU GO... If you learned something from this article, pay it forward and contribute to Spotlight PA at spotlightpa.org/donate. Spotlight PA is funded by foundations and readers like you who are committed to accountability journalism that gets results.

Roundup

From page 4A

The Credit Card Fairness Act is endorsed by Americans for Financial Reform, the Consumer Federation of America, Groundwork Collaborative, the National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients), Public Citizen, and Protect Borrowers.

Over $227M in insurance premiums saved

The Pennsylvania Insurance Department (PID) this week announced that it saved Pennsylvanians $227.9 million after blocking proposed property and casualty (P&C) insurance premium increases from taking effect in 2025.



Humphreys

PID's actions to prevent excessive increases will help keep insurance more affordable for Pennsylvanians.

"Our rate review process is designed to make sure Pennsylvanians have access to quality insurance products at fair prices," said Michael Humphreys, Pennsylvania insurance commissioner. "Blocking unfair rate increases takes constant, detailed work, and that's exactly what PID does. Our team reviews thousands of complex filings each year to make sure consumers are protected and treated fairly. These filings can be thousands of pages long and use a wide variety of variables to price products that may range from past claims history to an insured's education level, which require detailed review. We won't stop working to shield Pennsylvanians from unnecessary costs."

P&C insurance (personal auto, homeowners, renters, and flood insurance) protects individuals and businesses from financial losses arising from property damage, accidents, and negligence claims. Insurance companies must file their proposed rate changes with PID before they take effect.

PID's work on P&C rates is continuous and year-round. Insurance companies file new or revised rate requests throughout the year, and each filing must be reviewed independently. PID staff examine these filings to see if the proposed increases are justified, accurate, and fair to consumers. PID often works with insurers to revise or resubmit filings, provide additional data, or lower requested increases before approval is considered.

Through the rate review process in 2025, PID saved consumers from:

• $103.6M in title insurance premium increases;

• $91M in personal auto premium increases;

• $16M in homeowners/dwelling fire premium increases;

• $11.2M in personal umbrella premium increases; and

• $6.1M in other types of P&C insurance premium increases.

PID's rejection of $103.6M in proposed title insurance premium increases will help more Pennsylvanians afford homes by containing growing costs while positively impacting the housing market for years to come.

PID reminds Pennsylvanians to periodically check in with their insurance company or agent to review their coverage. Pennsylvania's insurance market is competitive with more than 1,200 insurers, so these reviews help consumers explore their options, such as raising their deductible to lower monthly costs or updating their coverage during life changes (like if their driving habits have changed).

Pennsylvanians should keep in mind that it can take up to 60 days after policy issuance for an insurance company to finish underwriting a new policy. PID recommends weighing the pros (such as lower costs or better benefits) and cons (such as losing some protections) before deciding whether to switch or stay with their current plan.

Pennsylvanians with questions about their insurance or who need to submit a complaint should visit pa.gov/consumer, or call 1-866-PA-COMPLAINT (1-866-722-6675).

LUZERNE COUNTY PROPERTY TRANSFERS



The following real estate transactions were recorded in the Luzerne County Office of the Recorder of Deeds from Dec. 15 to Dec. 19:

• Deal House Capital Fund II LLC to Blas Reinoso Polanco, $50,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Dale Burger (per agent), et al., to Cody Fisher and Melissa Fisher, $375,000, Rice Township.

• Harold M. Quinque (co-guardian), et al., to Robert A. Stark Jr., $198,500, Butler Township.

• Eagle Rock Resort Co. to Om P. Gandhi and Sushma Gandhi, $10, Black Creek Township.

• Thomas Wilishefski to Mas Decoroom Inc., $50,000, 44 Thompson St., Jenkins Township.

• Anastacia L. Ocot and Noel S. Ocot to Brielle John, $1, Hazle Township.

• Nicholas Morrison and Tara Giarratano to Brendan Brisk and Jourdaine Brisk, $288,297, Kingston Township.

• Elizabeth Delucia to Karl Nickolas Wallace and Jaime Lynn Webber, $180,000, Exeter Township.

• Sara Maria Perez, et al., to Jessica Rose Kellow, $263,000, Dallas Township.

• Gary Finnegan (trustee), et al., to James J. Casey Jr., $215,000, Edwardsville Borough.

• Raymond T. Ford and Benjamin Ford to Christopher Charles Boyle and Sandra D. Boyle, $995,000, Rice Township.

• Kenneth L. Krieg to 1004 W. Front LLC, $110,000, Harveys Lake Borough.

• Sand Springs Development Corp. to Randi Michelle Bunchalk, $304,185, 848 Champions Drive, Butler Township.

• Edward M. Kastreva and Linda M. Kastreva to Matthew O'Connor and Sara O'Connor, $404,000, Lake Township.

• Jonathan Marte to Edwin Medina, $10,000, Freeland Borough.

• John P. Coyle (executor), et al., to Miguel Reyes Almonte and Alba Yasmin Saldana De Reyes, $275,000, Hazleton City.

• Sally A. Shermer (per agent), et al., to Estaban Bonett, $284,900, Hazleton City.

• Michael H. Tobias (estate), et al., to Gemini Realty Investments LLC, $95,000, West Hazelton Borough.

• Christopher Bogdanovich to LMRT Properties LLC, $62,000, 134 State St., Nanticoke City.

• Susan Hurd (co-executrix), et al., to Darwin Rafael Beato and Andreina Delgato De Beato, $285,000, Hazleton City.

• Gelson Colon to Pena Sandoval Houses LLC, $110,000, 530 Pardee St., Hazleton City.

• Alvin Ariel Billini to Luis M. Pinales Tejeda, $154,000, 711 Boundary St., Hazleton City.

• Janice Blose and James A. Yankovich to Wilton Rivas and Carmen De Jesus, $105,000, 16 Priestly St., Wilkes-Barre City.

• Valenti Realty LLC to Deanns Realty LLC, $200,000, Exeter Borough.

• John W. Sisock to Angel Nunez and Yesenia Rosario, $205,000, Foster Township.

• Joann Zack (administratrix) and Louis P. Micklasavage (estate) to Miguel Martinez and Grismal Martinez, $160,000, 318 Chestnut St., Dupont Borough.

• William H. Blockus and Susan E. Smereski to Jindriska Marie Colon, $195,000, Newport Township.

• Angel Cruz to 366 Salsbury St. LLC, $88,000, Plymouth Borough.

• Donna Payer (executrix), et al., to Keith Edwards Phillips, $128,000, Nanticoke City.

• Desiree Kay Kelley to Drummond Property LLC, $95,000, Pittston City.

• Anthony McGowan and Mendy L. McGowan to Desiree Kelley, $80,000, Exeter Borough.

• Ronnie Yale to Mendoza Investments LLC, $110,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Thomas S. Wall, et al., to David J. Fine, $223,000, Ross Township.

• Reinardo Duran, et al., to Yoelissa Vasquez, $260,000, Hazleton City.

• Snyder Holdings LLC to Biagio Procope, et al., $300,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Andria Argo (executrix), et al., to Elinor Morgado Diaz, et al., $75,000, Pittston City.

• James Bell IV to Tot Tran and Nghiem T. Mai, $240,000, Pittston Township.

• Brian Walker, et al., to Kevin Steven Sucheki, $440,000, Pittston City.

• Elise Chan and Randolph Don to Elsie Chan, $1, Foster Township.

• Elise Chan and Randolph Don to Elsie Chan, $1, 59 Brookside Drive, Foster Township.

• L.C. Pritchard Inc. to John Devito, $180,000, Hanover Township.

• Mark P. Hession and Catherine H. Hession to 11th St. Properties LLC and 12th St. Properties LLC, $575,000, Forty Fort Borough.

• Patricia McNulty and Patricia Tosh to Peter Anyelo Perez Gonzalez, $138,500, 849 S. Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre City.

• Sukhvilago LLC to BBF Properties Group LLC, $266,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Ronald May and ABC Homebuyers LLC, $10, 321 W. Main St., Nanticoke City.

• Constantine J. Wayda to Diane Sola Fitzpatrick and Michael Fitzpatrick, $130,324, Ashley Borough.

• Briar Manor LLC to Fuentes Holding Group LLC, $130,000, Nanticoke City.

• Adrian Secheresiu and Emilia Secheresiu to Jeffrey Gicking, $770,000, Sugarloaf Township.

• Parsons Sale Co. Inc. to Toni Ann Bartoletti, $1, 22-24 Yale St., Wilkes-Barre City.

• G&B Realty LLC to Angel Flor Monsanto Valdez, $5,000, Hazle Township.

• Lower South Valley Land Bank to Royale Homes LLC, $2,500, Newport Township.

• Shawn Dolon and Keith Dolon to Carmen Miralma Mancebo Clase, $225,000, Hazleton City.

• Thomas Vercusky to OV Contractor LLC, $90,000, Butler Township.

• Jillian Roush and William Roush to Matthew C. Paul and Kassandra A. Cervoni, $400,000, 124 Debbie Drive, Butler Township.

• Greenbough Inc. to Fiser First Inc., $91,000, Black Creek Township.

• Alexandra C. Treslar (co-trustee), et al., to Children's Service Center of Wyoming Valley, $278,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• NEPA Housing LLC and N.E.P.A. Housing LLC to Esmeralda Santos and Angel D. Santos Utate, $225,000, 73 Rice St., Edwardsville Borough.

• Martin Carr to Pride MC Inc., $1, Dallas Township.

• CBA Realty LLC to Joandra Y Tejeda Gonzalez, $50,000, Hazleton City.

• Lois N. Taylor to Eagle Rock Resort Co., $10, Hazle Township.

• Ritchie Zatorski to Erika M. Karnoski, $125,000, 1201 Lincoln Ave., Nanticoke City.

• James Richard Selby (executor) and Joyce A. Selby (estate) to Eagle Rock Resort Co., $10, Hazle Township.

• Frank Castrignano and Debra Castrignano to E. Columbus Ave. PA LLC, $145,000, 54 E. Columbus Ave., Pittston City.

• William A. Begis and Ann Ray M. Begis to Eagle Rock Resort Co., $10, Hazle Township.

• Chaya Rabinowitz and Shmuel Ben Tzion Rabinowitz to Kingston Accounting LLC, $10,000, Luzerne Borough.

• Ruth J. Rynkiewicz and Jerry C. Rynkiewicz to Jason Davidson Metzger and Danielle Metzger, $330,000, Kingston Township.

• Henry I. Urgena and Celia F. Urgena to Eagle Rock Resort Co., $10, Hazle Township.

• Encarnacion R. Olavides and Roel N. Olavides to Eagle Rock Resort Co., $10, Hazle Township.

• Daniel Delbalso III, et al., to Kingston Accounting LLC, $200,000, 15 S. Thomas St., Kingston Borough.

• Kathleen Gibbons to Constance Corby and David M. Loux, $215,000, 406 Cedar St., Exeter Borough.

• Thomas Vercusky to Stanley Cespedes, $50,000, 352 S. Poplar St., Hazleton City.

• Joseph H. Peters and Sandra A. Peters to John Endler and Sherri Endler, $340,000, Laflin Borough.

• Triple Rock Associates LLC to 388 Main St. Estates LLC, $360,000, Swoyersville Borough.

• Yenason Properties LLC to LSC Realty Holdings II LLC, $300,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Tara E. Vallet and Tara E. Fox to Maiker Garces, $245,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Frank Stish to Jose Cruz Martinez and Susana Burgos, $215,000, Hazle Township.

• Dean R. Adams and Aileen N. Adams to Clement C. Kaminski III and Heather E. Lasco, $625,000, Dallas Borough.

• DWT LLC to 183-185 Zerby LLC, $360,000, Edwardsville Borough.

• G&A Group Services LLC to Snailing Nachally Bautista Jimenez, $272,000, Edwardsville Borough.

• Ronald P. Voelker to Roberto Lombert and Andy Lombert, $170,000, 23-25 Pace St., Larksville Borough.

• Jose Ariel Perez Martinez to Humberto A. Rosario, $1,000, 45 Carey Ave.-Susquehanna St., Wilkes-Barre City.

• Triple Rock Associates LLC to 9-11 Market LLC, $360,000, Pittston City.

• Francis E. Rowe III, et al., to HAAD LLC, $160,000, 74 Mary St., Ashley Borough.

• Terra I Investments Inc. to Shawn Ward and Lori Ward, $25,000, Butler Township.

• William M. Horan and Andrea Horan to John J. Venit and Marybeth Venit, $410,000, Conyngham Borough.

• Michael Joseph Ogurkis to Lori Ann Solomon and Cedrick Deon Solomon, $140,000, Kingston Borough.

• Val S. Ly to Luong Van Phu, $67,858.75, Larksville Borough.

• TLY Holdings LLC to Sean Kellie Clarkson and Janet Agnes Lillback, $280,000, Wright Township.

• Terence Kimmey to Jonathan Meyer and Andrea M. Kubis, $275,000, Foster Township.

• Luis S. Cespedes to Tejeda Property Management LLC, $145,000, 118 S. Fifth St., West Hazleton Borough.

• Olen Management LLC to Jason Silverstein, $110,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Tarek Awad to Goshe Real Estate LLC, $800,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Renee M. Mackunis (executrix) and Judith A. Mackunis (estate) to Jonathan Calles and Debora Calles, $172,000, Hanover Township.

• Eric A. Negron to Joshua L. Giannott, $132,000, Hanover Township.

• Lee Gustinucci Jr. (executor) and Natalie Gripp (estate) to Emil Cuello, $192,000, 215 Bowman St., Wilkes-Barre City.

• Steven J. Smith (administrator) and Barbara Bialek Smith (estate) to Jose Serrano Deleon, $200,000, Larksville Borough.

• Manasse Associates LLC to B and J Associate Property LLC, $175,000, Nanticoke City.

• John M. Crecca and Diana M. Crecca to Richard Edward Petner and Stephanie Petner, $572,000, Fairview Township.

• Andrew Rodgers and Denise Rodgers to Fiduciary Trust Company International of Pennsylvania (trustee), et al., $737,500, Wright Township.

See PROPERTY | 10A

MONK
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
570.333.COOL
MONKHVAC.COM
FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED SINCE 1917
WINTER HVAC TIPS FROM YOUR LOCAL COMFORT SPECIALISTS!
Keep vents clear of snow and debris, both inside and outside of your home.
Don't crank the thermostat! Raising the temperature too high won't heat your home faster. Increase in small increments.
Know the Warning Signs. If you hear unusual noises, notice uneven heat, or rising bills, DON'T WAIT! Call us right away!
Jim Monk
Service Manager, Monk HVAC

THEIR VIEW

If you believed the McRib was a real rib, we have some chicken nuggets to sell you

The Editorial Board
Chicago Tribune

Another day, another class-action lawsuit, this time about what kind of meat is in a sandwich.

Four lead plaintiffs, including Chicagoan Dorien Baker, are suing McDonald's, claiming the fast-food giant is misleading customers over what kind of meat it uses in its cult classic "McRib" sandwich.

"Despite its name and distinctive rib-like shape, it does not actually contain any pork rib meat," the lawsuit states.

Consumer protection law isn't meant to shield people from every assumption a brand name might invite, but from genuine deception on which a reasonable buyer would rely.

Does anyone truly believe the McRib is real rib meat? Does anyone pretend to know what part of the chicken is used to make a McNugget?

Do we really want to know?

In November, McDonald's announced that the McRib would make a limited-time return to select restaurants in cities across the country, including Chicago.

McRib lovers are in it for the taste and — yes — the mystique. Much of the allure of this weird sandwich stems from its irregular availability.

It's not as if McDonald's hasn't been fairly forthcoming about the makeup of the sandwich. If you must know, the McRib is a seasoned pork patty. More specifically: It's restructured pork (ground pork formed into that rib-shaped patty) slathered in barbecue sauce. McDonald's simply calls it a "pork sandwich" online.

Whether this lawsuit ultimately succeeds is for the courts to decide, but this complaint would seem to stretch consumer protection beyond its intended purpose.

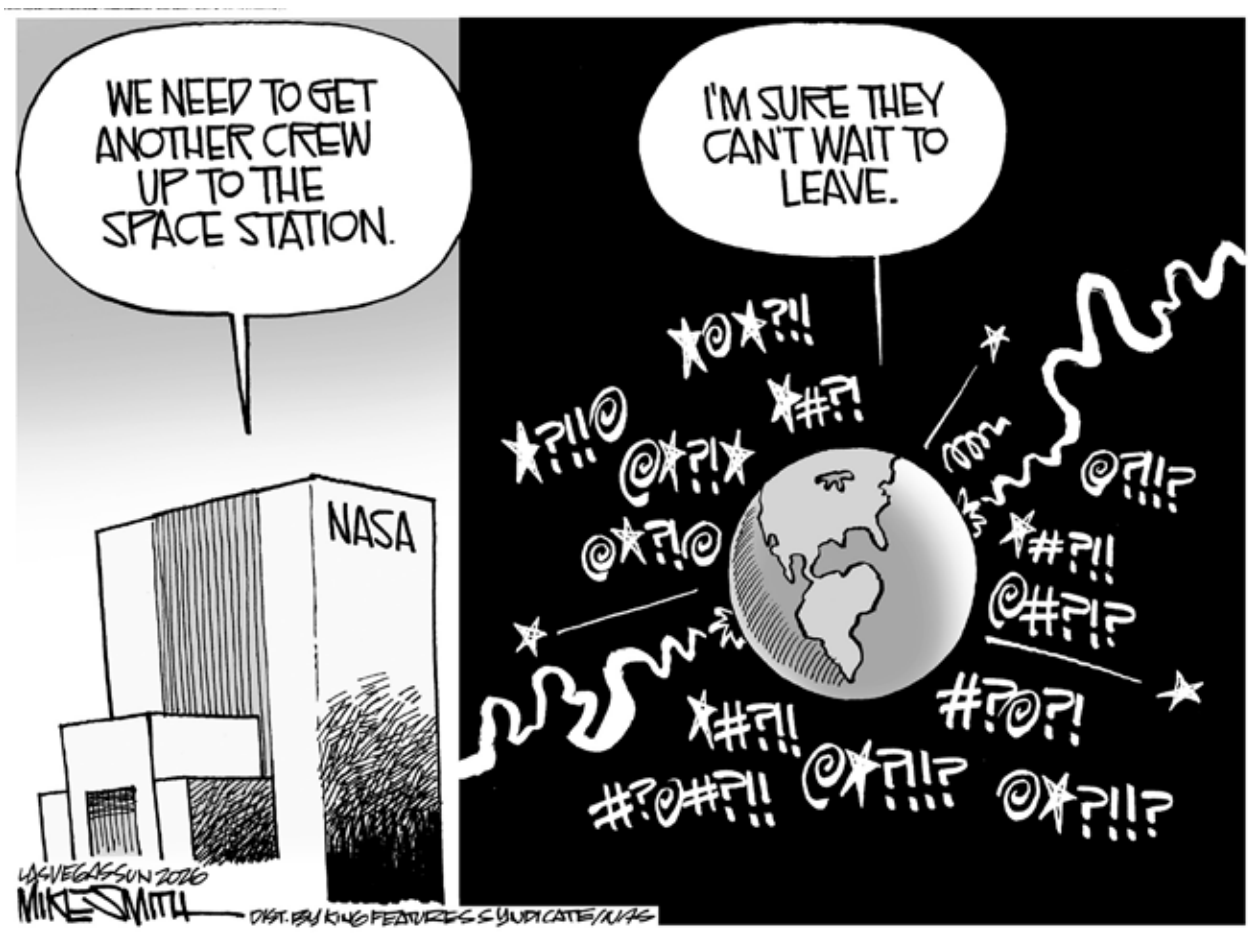
Yes, retailers should be forthcoming about what's being sold. We don't take too kindly to farm-raised salmon being sold as "wild caught" or "extra-virgin olive oil" that isn't. Products labeled as halal or kosher must actually be those things, otherwise companies can deceive devout Jewish or Muslim customers into violating their faith traditions.

But it doesn't strike us as a truth-in-advertising scandal that the McRib consists of part of the pig other than the rib. If it were turkey meat passed off as pork? OK then!

Want real ribs? Head to Twin Anchors in Lincoln Park, Jameson's in the suburbs, Green Street Smoked Meats in the West Loop or Lem's Bar-B-Q on the South Side. We've got enough great pork rib options in Chicagoland that you could hop around for weeks trying different spots.

And if you're in too big of a rush to grab the real thing — and a handful of napkins to wipe off the sauce — there's always the McRib. (While supplies last).

©2026 Chicago Tribune. Visit chicagotribune.com. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.



THEIR VIEW

The next Dust Bowl is becoming more likely

Mark Gongloff
Bloomberg Opinion

About 90 years ago, American farmers in the Great Plains had so ravaged the thin soil there that a series of droughts turned the region into a vast expanse of dust, which formed monstrous storms and polluted the skies in cities hundreds of miles away. Around that same time, many places in the U.S. suffered from the most extreme heat waves in the country's history, setting temperature records that stand today.

The two phenomena — the Dust Bowl and those epic heat waves — were connected. The former produced the latter, which in turn refueled the former, and so on. A new study released this week by the weather forecasting firm AccuWeather suggests the conditions that produced the vicious cycle of drought and heat in the 1930s are returning to the US. This time, it appears to be due to the heating of the planet by greenhouse gases, meaning these changes will be essentially permanent, unlike conditions 90 years ago.

This doesn't mean we're doomed to another Dust Bowl. It does mean we're potentially in for a much drier, hotter future than many of us might expect, one where heat waves will be more extreme and farming and finding fresh water will be more difficult in many parts of the country.

"If this trend continues, because of the drought and heat interaction, it suggests warming could exceed what the common climate models are suggesting," AccuWeather founder Joel Myers told me.

Crunching decades of data collected at 44 weather stations across the country, AccuWeather found the average temperature in the US has risen by 3 degrees Fahrenheit, or 1.66 degrees Celsius, over the past 70 years. This would seem to be a faster rate of warming than the global average, which has risen by about 1.3C since the late 1800s.

That's only half of the bad news. AccuWeather also found that the relative humidity in the air has fallen 5.3% since 1995, on average, after staying fairly steady for the first 40 years of data. Average rainfall has decreased 2.7% during that time, even though the likelihood of torrential downpours that bring more than 4 inches of rain in 24 hours has jumped by a massive 70%.

In plain language, we're getting less rain. But when we do get it, we get it in destructive deluges that don't help much to irrigate crops or replenish groundwater.

Hotter air holds more moisture, according to physics. Every 1 degree Celsius of warming means air can hold 7% more water. So why hasn't the moisture in the air risen in lockstep with the heat in the US? One reason is that the ground has only so much water available to evaporate into the air, Myers pointed out. Decades of warming have wrung many parts of the US dry.

The total amount of water vapor in the air is still increasing. That's more bad news for the climate, because water vapor is a massive greenhouse gas. Globally, it hit its highest level on record in 2024, according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service. But in the U.S., at least, though it has also risen, it hasn't kept up with the rise in temperatures. That's why the humidity relative to temperature has fallen here.

This is where the vicious cycle connecting drought to heat kicks in. Hotter air dries out the land through evaporation. That means there's less water in the soil to absorb heat and draw it deeper into the Earth. So the heat stays on the surface, keeping the air hotter. Rinse, repeat, lose your farm.

This cycle helps explain why the 1930s were so freakishly hot in the U.S. but relatively cool in the rest of the world. Kansas and North Dakota each set their record high temperatures of 121F in July 1936. Oklahoma hit 120F twice in that same month. The return of rain at the end of the decade ended the Dust Bowl, and soil-conservation efforts by the federal government helped prevent its return. The heat-drought cycle was broken then. It may yet make a comeback.

Even as climate change makes clean water more scarce, the Trump administration is doing everything it can to worsen the problem. Its Environmental Protection Agency — an increasingly ironic name — has proposed gutting protections for wetlands based on a nonsensical definition of "water." This will not only threaten groundwater replenishment but make flooding and pollution worse. Those wetlands also absorb carbon dioxide, meaning their disappearance will further hasten global heating.

Trump's other moves include manipulating California's dwindling supply on dubious pretenses and vetoing a Colorado water project 60 years in the making, possibly to get even with Representative Lauren Boebert for voting to release the Epstein files. "(N)othing says 'America First' like denying clean drinking water to 50,000 people in Southeast Colorado," Boebert wrote of the veto.

As with the hundreds of other blows Trump has delivered to the environment, the EPA's wetlands assault is ostensibly meant to boost the economy. It's as shortsighted as those American farmers who, when wheat prices fell in the 1920s, worked already stressed soil even harder, hastening the Dust Bowl. A repeat is not inevitable. But on our current trajectory, it's not out of the question, either.

This column reflects the personal views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Mark Gongloff is a Bloomberg Opinion editor and columnist covering climate change. He previously worked for Fortune.com, the Huffington Post and the Wall Street Journal.

SEND US YOUR OPINION

Letters to the editor must include the letter writer's name, address and daytime phone number for verification. Letters should be no more than 250 words. We reserve the right to edit and limit writers to one published letter every 30 days.

- Email: opinion@timesleader.com
- Mail: Your Opinion, Times Leader, 90 E. Market St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

DOONESBURY: CLASSIC '80s By Garry Trudeau



MALLARD FILLMORE By Bruce Tinsley



Board: Misreporting of rapes 'didn't make any difference'

By Min Xian
For Spotlight PA State College

STATE COLLEGE — The head of a civilian oversight board said the State College Police Department's misclassification of hundreds of rapes "didn't make any difference" to how the cases were handled.

Community Oversight Board Chair Ron Madrid made those comments to Borough Council members during a Jan. 12 meeting in response to a 10-month Spotlight PA investigation. The newsroom found the department, which serves the community surrounding Penn State, had erroneously reported 254 cases of rape between 2013 and 2021 as sexual offenses, leading to highly inaccurate publicly reported crime data.

The department had never acknowledged the longstanding error or disclosed it to the public until approached by Spotlight PA about potential data discrepancies.

Experts told Spotlight PA that the way rapes are labeled matters for victims and communities. Local crime data are shared with the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, known as UCR. Those figures are an important measure of public safety and help governments decide where to deploy resources and direct public funds.

Madrid, however, focused his public comments on the handling of cases.

"We investigated the anomaly and determined that though some rapes were reported as sexual assaults over a period of time, it did not lessen the vigor, professionalism, and thoroughness of the investigations," he said.

He also claimed the Spotlight PA investigation did "not paint a complete picture." A request to explain that comment was not returned by the time of this story's publication.

In 2012, the FBI announced it would broaden its definition of rape to "ensure justice for those whose lives have been devastated by sexual violence," then-U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said at the time.

State College Police Chief John Gardner, who retired in late 2025, previously told Spotlight PA that he wasn't aware until 2022 that the FBI had updated its definition of rape. Gardner's predecessor, Tom King, who retired from the department in 2016, said he only learned about the incorrect reporting when contacted by Spotlight PA this summer.

Borough Council President Evan Myers commended Madrid for taking on "this independent investigation." However, when Council Member Nalini Krishnankutty asked Madrid to detail how the oversight board assessed the findings published by Spotlight PA, he said, "Investigation might be too strong a word."

About this story
This story was produced by the State College regional bureau of Spotlight PA, an independent, nonpartisan newsroom dedicated to investigative and public-service journalism for Pennsylvania.



Georgianna Sutherland | For Spotlight PA
The State College Municipal Building.

"We asked the State College Police Department for a ream of information on exactly what happened. They provided that information, and we assessed that the change in reporting was really a change of definition for standardization by the FBI," Madrid told Krishnankutty. "We evaluated the thoroughness of the individual investigations of each of the incidents. It was determined that, wait a minute, what it was called didn't make any difference."

Asked by Council Member Gopal Balachandran how the oversight board determined that the police's investigation of each incident was thoroughly conducted, Madrid replied that the department told the board it applied the same protocol for investigating rapes and sexual assaults.

"So no, we didn't take, 'Show me case one, show me case two,'" Madrid said. "It was in total of these, of all of these reported incidents. Did you investigate thoroughly? And they did."

Madrid did not respond to a request for comment from Spotlight PA to clarify when the oversight board's review was initiated and concluded, or what it entailed.

Krishnankutty asked Madrid if any gap in communication between State College police and Pennsylvania State Police could be prevented in the future. Madrid did not answer that question.

See RAPES | 11A

Many starting 'to take it seriously'

Republicans and Democrats trying to contain Trump's Greenland aggression

By Stephen Groves
The Associated Press



AP Photo
People protest against Trump's policy towards Greenland in front of the US consulate in Nuuk, Greenland, on Saturday.

WASHINGTON — Republican lawmakers are scrambling to contain President Donald Trump's threats of taking possession of Greenland, with some showing the most strident opposition to almost anything the Trump administration has done since taking office.

They gave floor speeches on the importance of NATO last week. They introduced bills meant to prevent the U.S. from attacking Denmark. And several traveled to Copenhagen to meet with Danish counterparts.

But it's not clear that will be enough, as the president continues to insist that he will take control of the Arctic island. It's raised fears of an end to NATO — a decades-old alliance that has been a pillar of American strength in Europe and around the globe — and raised questions on Capitol Hill and around the world about what Trump's aggressive, go-it-alone foreign policy will mean for world order.

"When the most powerful military nation on earth threatens your territory through its president over and over and over again, you start to take it seriously," Sen. Chris Coons told The Associated Press.

The Delaware Democrat organized the bipartisan trip to Denmark to "bring the temperature down a bit," he said, as well as further talks about mutual military agreements in the Arctic. Republican Sens. Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska accompanied a handful of Democrats on the trip. Also, Republican lawmakers joined in meetings in Washington last week with the Danish foreign minister and his Greenlandic counterpart where they discussed security agreements.

Yet it's clear Trump has other ideas. He said Saturday he will charge a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from eight European nations because of their opposition to his Greenland plans.

Trump said on social media that because of modern weapons systems "the need to ACQUIRE is especially important."

The pushback to Trump's Greenland plans

Key Republicans have made clear they think that forcefully taking Greenland is out of the question. But so far, they've avoided directly rebuking Trump for his talk of possessing the island.

Tillis on social media called Trumps tariff plans "bad for America, bad for American businesses, and bad for America's allies."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., told reporters Thursday that "there's certainly not an appetite here for some of the options that have been talked about or considered."

In a floor speech, Thune's predecessor as Republican leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell, warned that an attempt to seize Greenland would "shatter the trust of allies" and tarnish Trump's legacy with a disastrous foreign policy decision.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers alike see an obvious path to bolstering American interests in Greenland while keeping the relationship with NATO-ally Denmark intact.

In a meeting with lawmakers Thursday, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt discussed how the countries could work together to develop critical mineral industries and military cooperation, Coons said. The diplomats also told the senators there is no evidence of Chinese or Russian activity in Greenland.

Trump has made the argument that the U.S. should take Greenland before China or Russia do, prompting worry across Europe. Troops from several nations have been sent to Greenland in support of Denmark.

Murkowski said on social media that "our NATO allies are being forced to divert attention and resources to Greenland, a dynamic that plays directly into Putin's hands by threatening the stability of the strongest coalition of democracies the world has ever seen."

What can Congress do?

Lawmakers are looking at a few options for taking a military attack on Greenland off the table. Still, the Trump administration has shown little if any willingness to get congressional approval before taking military action.

See GREENLAND | 11A

All Trips Include Roundtrip Motorcoach and Airfare
TRAVELWORLD
GROUP TOURS & CRUISES | EST. 1975
OVER 50 YEARS OF TRUSTED TRAVEL

TUSCAN TREASURES
EXPERIENCE AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY THROUGH TUSCANY AND THE STUNNING CINQUE TERRE! EXPLORE FLORENCE, PISA, SIENA, LUCCA, AND MORE!
APRIL 18-27, 2026
$3,995/PP*

ARUBA
ADULTS ONLY
5-NIGHTS AT THE RIU PALACE, OCEANVIEW BALCONY
SEPT. 27 - OCT. 2, 2026
$2,695/PP

LAS VEGAS
4-NIGHTS IN A DELUXE ROOM AT THE TREASURE ISLAND HOTEL, RESORT FEES INCLUDED
MAY 12-16, 2026
$1,395/PP*

TREASURES OF ITALY
EMBARK ON A JOURNEY THROUGH ITALY'S MOST ICONIC CITIES! CRUISE THROUGH VENICE'S CANALS, MARVEL AT FLORENCE'S RENAISSANCE WONDERS AND EXPLORE THE ANCIENT HEART OF ROME
MAY 10-18, 2026
$4,995/ PP*

ALL PRICES BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY.
ALL TRIPS INCLUDE ROUND TRIP TRANSPORTATION FROM WB/SCRT AND AIRFARE!
CALL TODAY - LIMITED SEATS AVAILABLE. | $500 NON REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT TO CONFIRM RESERVATION.
WWW.ASKTRAVELWORLD.COM Find Us On
CALL US FOR DETAILS! 570-288-9311 | 601 MARKET STREET – KINGSTON
570-342-5790 | 435 GREEN RIDGE STREET – SCRANTON

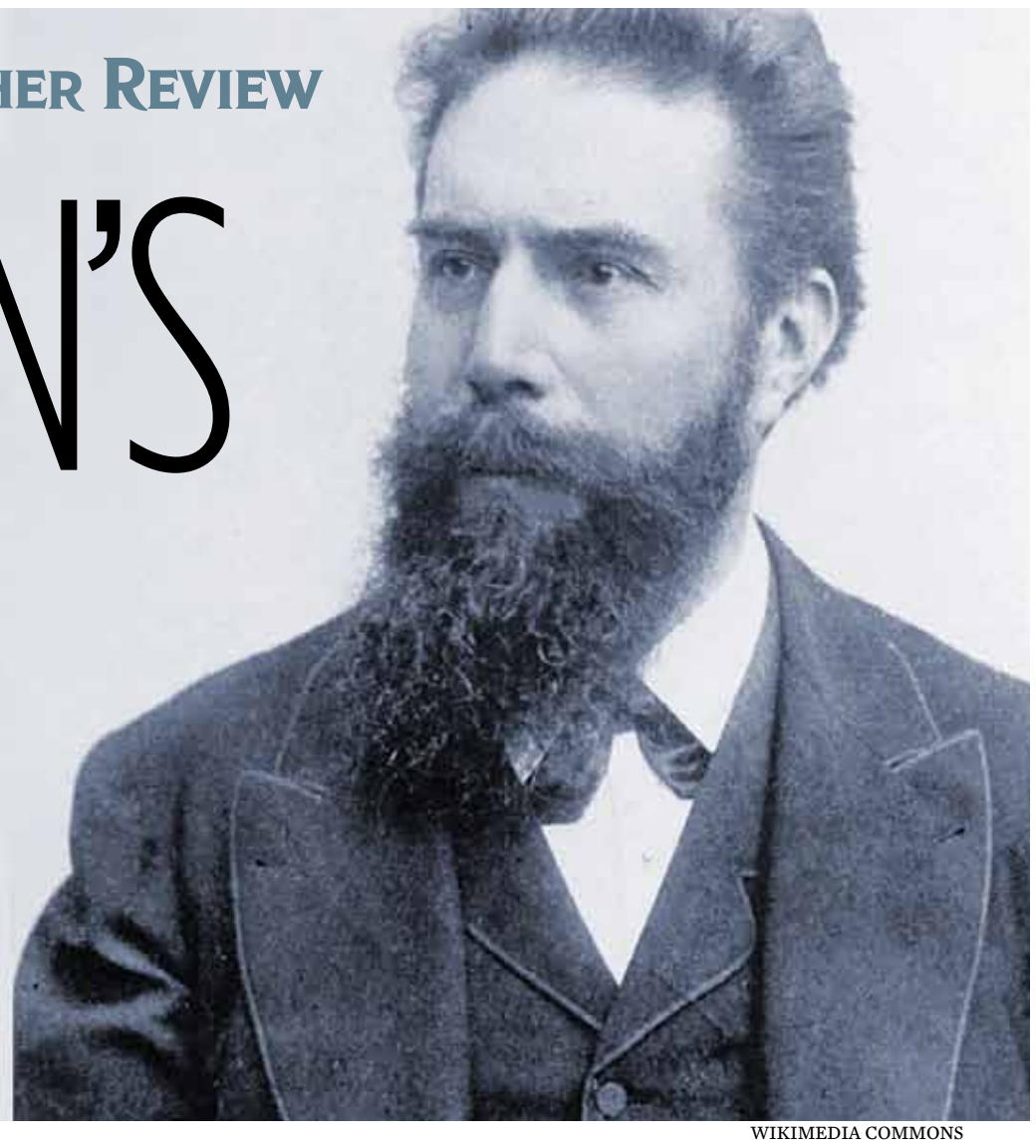
DIVERSIFIED...
FOR ALL OF YOUR REAL ESTATE NEEDS
RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, LEASING AND LAND



PROVIDING PROMPT, PROFESSIONAL SERVICE WITH ATTENTION TO DETAIL FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS
JUDY RICE, ASSOCIATE BROKER GRI, ABR, CRS
LEWITH & FREEMAN REAL ESTATE
O: (570) 288-9371
D: (570) 714-9230
EMAIL: JUDYRICE@EPIX.NET

FURTHER REVIEW

RÖNTGEN'S RAYS



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

By Charles Apple
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

X-Rays are the amazing bits of the electro-magnetic spectrum that allow us to see through many objects — including human soft tissue.

But when they were first publicly demonstrated on Jan. 23, 1896 — 130 years ago — no one knew quite what they were or exactly how or why they worked.

THE ACCIDENTAL DISCOVERY OF X-RAYS

Wilhelm Röntgen was an experimental physicist and chair of the physics department at the University of Würzburg — one of Germany's oldest and most-respected institutions.

In 1895, Röntgen was experimenting in his darkened laboratory with the effects of passing an electric discharge through various types of vacuum tubes: glass bulbs with positive and negative electrodes, evacuated of air.

On Nov. 8, 1895, he noticed that not only was the gas in the tube glowing, but a fluorescent glow also appeared on a nearby chemically-coated screen.

"And what did you think?" a reporter later asked him. "I did not think; I investigated," Röntgen replied.

Röntgen decided the glow was caused by cathode rays. Because of all the unknowns about them, Röntgen called them X-rays. For the next several weeks, Röntgen worked alone in his lab to pursued the matter. He found the X-rays passed through various objects — tinfoil, rubber sheets, wooden boards, a double pack of cards, a 1,000-page book — and lit up the screen. One of the few materials he found that *didn't* let X-rays pass: lead.

He also found that X-rays could also penetrate flesh: They could pass through soft tissue but not bones. Struck by this, he aimed his X-ray emitter at a photographic plate and, on Dec. 22, 1895, talked his wife, Anna Bertha, into placing her hand in front of it.

Mrs. Röntgen was stunned by the resulting image of her finger bones and her wedding ring. "I have seen my death," she told her husband.



SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

A Crookes tube similar to the one with which Röntgen was experimenting when he discovered X-rays.



UNIVERSITY OF WÜRZBURG

Röntgen's first "medical" X-ray photo was of his wife's hand, but, one month later ...



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

... Röntgen photographed a colleague's hand in a public demonstration.

Six days later, on Dec. 28, Röntgen's first paper about his discovery — "Über eine neue Art von Strahlen," or "On a New Kind of Rays" — was published in the Proceedings of the Würzburg Physico-Medical Society. Nine days after that — on Jan. 5, 1896 — an Austrian newspaper reported his discovery.

On Jan. 23 — just 11 weeks after his discovery — Röntgen made a public presentation to the Würzburg Physico-Medical Society. During that lecture, he demonstrated X-rays by duplicating the experiment he had done with his wife: In front of his audience, he made an X-ray plate of the hand of one of the anatomists in attendance, Albert von Kölliker.

Von Kölliker joined with the scientists who were suggesting the new phenomena be called "Röntgen's Rays." Most folks continued to call them "X-rays." Today, in German and a number of other languages in Central and Eastern Europe, X-rays are called Röntgen's Rays and the medical photos that are made with X-rays are called "Röntgenograms."

Röntgen also declined to patent his discovery, saying he wanted society to benefit from X-rays. In 1901, Röntgen would be awarded the first Nobel Prize in Physics. He declined to give a Nobel lecture.

Röntgen and his wife planned to immigrate to the United States but were prevented when World War I broke out. He died of colorectal cancer in 1923 at the age of 77.

X-RAYS 'GO VIRAL'

The exhaustive test results Röntgen wrote and spoke about were easily reproduced by other scientists. Some, like Nikola Tesla, not only produced their own X-rays but also began experimenting with X-ray photography.

Scientists began X-raying all sorts of things: mummies, fossils, frogs and insects and weapons, for example. By February 1896, Dr. John Hall-Edwards of Birmingham, England, was using X-rays as an aid in surgical procedures.

The science community enthusiastically accepted X-ray technology, even before it was fully understood. In 1896 alone, a Röntgen biographer estimated that more than 49 essays and 1,044 articles were published about X-rays, their nature and their use.

The general public, too, became fascinated with X-rays and possibilities of using X-rays in medicine. But there were some who viewed the new technology with skepticism.

Some, in the Victorian age, felt threatened by these high-tech beams that could allow users to see through objects, much of the human body and, yes, clothing.

A London firm developed lead-lined underwear, which it claimed was "X-ray-proof underclothing" that would allow ladies of the day to protect their modesty.



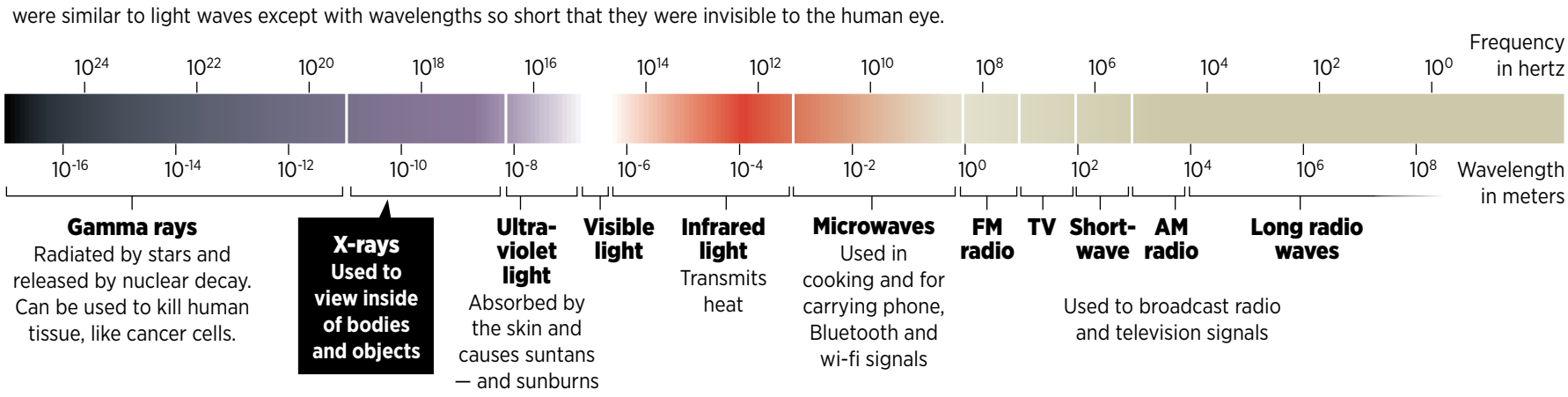
TORONTO GLOBE

X-ray portraits were offered to those who had money to spend. X-ray machines were installed in shoe stores to help clerks find just the right fit for their customers.

It wasn't long, though, that some who worked with X-rays began experiencing health issues. In 1904, one of Thomas Edison's assistants died of skin cancer. This prompted Edison to discontinue his work with X-rays.

THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM

In 1895, there were many other scientists experimenting with cathode rays. Undoubtedly, some had already produced X-rays. But Röntgen was the first to notice them. Röntgen work on X-rays was so thorough that no significant new physical properties of X-rays were discovered until 1912, when Max von Laue found they were similar to light waves except with wavelengths so short that they were invisible to the human eye.



Sources: "100 Great Scientists Who Changed the World" by John Balchin, "How Technology Works" by Dorling Kindersley, "Smithsonian Times of Science" edited by Robert Winston et. al., "I Used to Know That: Science" by Marianne Taylor, the Nobel Prize, the American Physical Society, Irving Medical Center of Columbia University, National Museum of Health and Medicine, the Canadian Medical Association Journal, Science Museum Group, PBS News, History.com

Property

From page 6A

• Richard N. Jones and Brenda L. Jones to Handy Homes LLC, $80,000, 95 N. Fulton St., Wilkes-Barre City.

• Edward Joseph Buck and Catherine A. Buck to Deysis A. Baez Torres, $170,000, Hazleton City.

• Beverly Ann Mussoline to Aleigha Sokolowski and Erik Staerk, $170,000, 153 S. Hunter Highway, Butler Township.

• Arlene J. Poltrock to Stephanie Fellin and Michael Fellin, $15,000, Butler Township.

• Sharon J. Wenner to MGN Realty LLC, $289,000, Black Creek Township.

• Louis J. Sabia and Linda H. Sabia to Kathleen Sabol, $5,000, Butler Township.

• Louis J. Sabia and Linda H. Sabia to Kathleen Sabol, $262,000, Butler Township.

• Lorie L. Martin (trustee), et al., to Nicholas James Mathers, $145,000, 98 Caverton Road, Kingston Township.

• Stephen M. Courtney to Smerlyn Miguel Duran Cruz, $184,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Martin L. Straub and Barbara A. Straub to 78 Wonder Properties LLC, $135,000, Kingston Borough.

• DWT LLC to 184-186 Zerby LLC, $230,000, 184-186 Zerby Ave., Edwardsville Borough.

• DWT LLC to 187 Zerby LC, $230,000, Edwardsville Borough.

• BBBB LLC to 1431-1433 S. Main LLC, $230,000, Hanover Township.

• Susan M. Evans (administratrix), et al., to Robert Eppler and Darlene Maria Eppler, $30,000, 457 Wyoming St., Hanover Township.

• Marie H. Roginski to Dale J. Reilly and Michelle K. Reilly, $1, Ross Township.

• D&N Realty Investment LLC to PNR Holdings LLC, $250,000, Nanticoke City.

• Anthony Joseph Marsicano to Michael Farina, $70,000, 133 Thirwell Ave., Hazleton City.

• Stanley D. Staskiel and Patricia M. Staskiel to Leroy A. Fettig Jr., et al., $215,000, Plains Township.

• James T. Heffernan Jr. to Michele Vodzak, $160,000, Hanover Township.

• John W. Zug to Jessica Lynn Wright and James Gandy, $174,742, Exeter Borough.

• Bernard Wallace (executor) and Julia M. Wallace (estate) to Altical LLC and Landpad, $17,500, Jackson Township.

• Mark Gabel and Lois Gabel to Vasquez LLC, $70,000, 26 Abbott St., Wilkes-Barre City.

• Sarah N. Ankner and Sarah N. Shimko to Octavio A. Baez, $138,500, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Leonard D. Kluchinski (executor) and Eleanor Kluchinski (estate) to Austin Hummel, $160,000, Wilkes-Barre Township.

• Katlyn Laura Pearson to David J. Chromey and Tanya Festa, $30,000, Ross Township.

• Mary C. Sabach to Maria Sumba, $105,000, Dupont Borough.

• Carlos Paredes to Deyanira Mateo, $15,000, Wilkes-Barre City.

• Selmani Holding LLC to Ruedas Onh LLC, $290,000, 515-519 Monges St., Hazleton City.

• Allan Capozucca, et al., to Raymond Albert Capozucca Jr. and Arar Realty, $75,000, 6 Fear St., Pittston City.

• Jose Rodriquez to Benjamin Lenkofsky and Breanna Vosburg, $298,000, Exeter Borough.

• Susan Lewis (trustee), et al., to James D. Perrin and Tamara P. Perrin, $350,000, Exeter Township.

• Imperial Solutions LLC to GSGF Group LLC, $250,000, 69 Bidlack St., Forty Fort Borough.

• Windy Acres Investments LLC to Daniel Eddy and Lyndsey Leigh Eddy, $253,500, 97 Myers St., Forty Fort Borough.

FREE ACCESS MONDAYS Clickable Ads!

NORTHEAST Auto GLASS & CALIBRATIONS

Quality Reflects Safety

570-822-0100

NORTHEASTAUTOGLASS.NET

FREE Virtual Meeting

Tips & Tricks of Trusts: How to Protect Assets from Rising Long-Term Care Costs

Secure more wealth & provide a legacy for the next generation!

Join one of the co-authors of the PA Trust Guide, Attorney Jenna Franks, CELA*, and Attorney Stacey Acri, as they discuss a financial readiness plan that prepares for the healthcare challenges of tomorrow. If you've ever thought about setting up a trust, then this webinar is for you!

Get these questions answered:

- How does a trust offer asset protection from the costs of nursing home care?
- Why does it matter if a trust is revocable or irrevocable?
- What assets are normally placed into a trust (home, life insurance, retirement savings, etc.)?
- Are the trust assets available for my family's use & how do they access the assets?
- Does a trust keep my children's inheritance safe – are there any tax advantages?
- Do you have to be "rich" or have multiple investment accounts to benefit from using a trust?
- What situations are common for setting up a trust?

Steinbacher • Goodall • Yurchak
Your elder care and special needs law firm
Quality representation in litigation

Hosted By:



Jenna L. Franks, Esq., CELA*
*Certified as an Elder Law Attorney by the National Elder Law Foundation



Stacey F. Acri, Esq.

Wednesday, January 21 3 PM
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM
*Viewing instructions provided upon registration.
- Register by calling 1-800-215-1824
- online at PAElderCounsel.com/register
- by email info@paeldercounsel.com
- or scan the QR code!

SCAN ME!

Call today for a consultation
800.351.8334 • PAElderCounsel.com
273 E. Northampton St., Wilkes-Barre, PA

Greenland

From page 8A

Lawmakers, including Republicans like Murkowski, are pushing legislation that would prohibit Department of Defense funds from being used to attack or occupy territory that belongs to other NATO members without their consent.

The Alaska senator also suggested Congress could act to nullify Trump's tariffs. Murkowski and several other Republicans have already helped pass resolutions last year meant to undo tariffs around the globe, but those pieces of legislation did not gain traction in the House. They would have also required Trump's signature or support from two-thirds of both chambers to override his veto.

Democrats have also found some traction with war powers resolutions meant to force the president to get congressional approval before engaging in hostilities. Republicans last week narrowly defeated one such resolution that would prohibit Trump from attacking Venezuela again, and Democrats think there could potentially be more Republicans who would support one applying to Greenland.



AP Photo

A woman pulls her children on a sled during a protest against Trump's policy towards Greenland in front of the US consulate in Nuuk, Greenland, on Saturday.

"What I've noticed is these war powers resolutions, they do put some pressure on Republicans," said Sen. Tim Kaine, a Virginia Democrat who has forced votes on several similar resolutions. He said the tactic has also compelled the Trump administration to provide lawmakers with briefings and commitments to get congressional approval before deploying troops.

Still, while dismissing the Venezuela war powers resolution on Wednesday, Republican leaders made the argument that the legislation should be ruled out of order because the Trump administration has said there are currently no U.S. troops on the ground in Venezuela.

That argument may set a precedent for future war powers resolutions, giving Republicans a way to avoid voting against Trump's wishes.

"If you don't have boots on the ground, it's a moot point," said Sen. Mike Rounds, a South Dakota Republican, about war powers resolutions in general. He also argued that the prospect of taking Greenland over the objections of Denmark is nothing "more than a hypothetical."

Other Republicans have expressed support for Trump's insistence that the U.S. possess Greenland, though they have downplayed the idea that the U.S. would take it by force.

That's left the strongest objections on the Republican side of the aisle coming from a handful of lawmakers who are leaving Congress next year.

Rep. Don Bacon, a Nebraska Republican, told The Omaha World Herald that an invasion of Greenland would lead to Trump's impeachment — something he would "lean" towards supporting.

Tillis, another retiring Republican, has directed his criticism at Trump advisors like White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller.

"The fact that a small handful of 'advisors' are actively pushing for coercive action to seize territory of an ally is beyond stupid," he said.

Rapes

From page 8A

As previously reported, a Pennsylvania State Police spokesperson told Spotlight PA the agency alerted local police departments about the change. A December 2012 notification "outlined the new definition and instructed agencies to report offenses accordingly, starting in January 2013," Myles Snyder wrote in an email.

A five-paragraph notice was sent via the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network, or CLEAN, a platform police departments use to communicate with other agencies, on Dec. 27, 2012 — less than a week before the new requirement took effect, according to a document obtained through a public records request.

Agencies like the State College Police Department have to acknowledge receipt of every message sent over CLEAN, Snyder told Spotlight PA in October. It is not optional, and "lives depend on it."

Balachandran told Spotlight PA after the Jan. 12 public meeting that following the publication of the newsroom's December investigation, he observed misinformed reactions from the public regarding the police's role in criminal prosecution, which the news story did not delve into.

Speaking in his individual capacity and not on behalf of the Borough Council, Balachandran said he "can see they made a mistake" in reporting crime statistics and it's "good to call attention to it."

Madrid's statements echoed what State College police officials told reporters throughout the course of reporting. Matthew Wilson, a former assistant chief who is now chief in Ferguson Township, told Spotlight PA in a February 2025 interview that the police department wasn't calling those incidents rapes, but it was calling them sexual offenses. "I don't see it as a huge deal," Wilson said.

Rapes fall into a crime category that includes the most severe offenses, according to FBI rules. They are high priorities for law enforcement, often bringing with them pressure to make arrests and clear cases. These are considered indicators of the level of crime occurring in the country, Spotlight PA previously reported. Sexual offenses belong in another category with lower penalties and are treated with less urgency.

Anne Ard, former executive director of Centre Safe, told Spotlight PA in August that the way rapes are labeled matters for victims and communities.

"It's not just about how it shows up in statistics, it's about how people think about what's happened to them, how other people think about what's happened to them, how the community thinks about what's happened to them," Ard said.

At a Community Oversight Board meeting on Jan. 8, Madrid said the board had not received any public complaints regarding Spotlight PA's findings. He said the board plans to host a town hall to address the rape investigation protocols of the State College Police Department this year.

If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual violence, Centre Safe is available 24/7 at 877-234-5050.

SUPPORT THIS JOURNALISM and help us reinvigorate local news in north-central Pennsylvania at spotlightpa.org/donate. Spotlight PA is funded by foundations and readers like you who are committed to accountability and public-service journalism that gets results.

a BUZZworthy auto loan
Here's what you'll get
No payments till Winter!
FREE Carwash
1% Cash Back
plus... we will BEEat your rate!
citymark

You're in our caring hands, every step of the way
Touch of Kindness Transportation
Transportation with Care & Compassion
Looking for reliable transportation for an elderly or loved one?
Our services include:
Dialysis
Medical Appointments
Same-day procedures
Discharges from the hospital
Physical Rehabilitation
Nursing Homes/Senior Living Facilities
And much more!
(570) 301-2532
Toktrans80@gmail.com
Hours of operation 24/7 including weekends and holidays

CLYDE SMITH
INSURANCE AGENCY INC.
• FARM
• HOME
• AUTO
• MOBILE HOME
• LIFE
• BUSINESS
117 NORTH STATE STREET | CLARKS SUMMIT, PA 18411
BUS: 570-587-5337 FAX: 570-587-0346
EMAIL: SMITHINS@AOL.COM

Wilkes Barre Newest Hotel Coming Soon!
DoubleTree by Hilton
BOOK NOW
Now Booking 2026 Weddings
600 Wildflower Drive Wilkes Barre, PA 18702 570-822-1011

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES | POGGI, REALTORS®
Home Is Right Around The Corner
1149 Wyoming Ave, Forty Fort
570-283-9100
28 Carverton Road, Shavertown
570-696-2600

Revelation Lifestyle & Mobility CENTER
600 Luzerne Avenue • West Pittston
570.313.1057
RevelationLMC.com
The area's Flagship dealer of Golden® Reclining Lift Chairs, Scooters, Power Wheel Chairs, & Daily Living Essentials
GOLDEN
HOURS: Mon. 10-6pm; Thurs. & Fri. 10-6pm; Sat. 11-3pm
CLOSED Tues., Wed., & Sun.

EIO WASTE SOLUTIONS & RECYCLING
5312 PA-309, Monroe TWP, PA 18618
www.eiowaste.com
(570) 255-2574
The Back Mountains First Choice For Waste & Recycling
Residential • Commercial • Municipal
Awesome benefits for weekly garbage pickup! Join our brand!
• FREE Gray Garbage Tote
• FREE Metal Drop off at the yard
• FREE Recycling at the yard
• FREE drop off of unwanted household items - 1/4 ton every 3 months
• Discounts on dumpster prices

MARTZ BUS EST. 1908
TOUR OF THE WEEK
Philadelphia Flower Show
March 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6
$135 per person
We've got a tour for every age, every interest
www.martztours.com
Call 570-361-9668

LA TOLTECA
Craving bold, flavorful Mexican dishes?
LUNCH | DINNER | TAKE OUT
LA TOLTECA IS READY TO SERVE UP YOUR FAVORITES
VEGETARIAN AND SEAFOOD MENU AVAILABLE!
Stop by today!
Buy one lunch get the second HALF OFF
Visit us at any of our two locations:
POCONOS
WILKES BARRE
lovelatolteca.com

At least 21 killed after train crash in Spain

By Joseph Wilson and Suman Naishadham
The Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — A high-speed train derailed, jumped onto the track in the opposite direction, and slammed into an oncoming train Sunday in southern Spain, killing at least 21 people and injuring dozens more, the country's transport minister said.

The tail end of an evening train between Malaga and Madrid, with some 300 passengers, went off the rails near Córdoba at 7:45 p.m. local time and slammed into a train with some 200 passengers coming from Madrid to Huelva, another southern Spanish city, according to rail operator Adif.

Spain's Transport Minister Óscar Puente updated the death toll to 21 confirmed victims after midnight when he said that rescues had removed all the survivors. But Puente said there could be more victims still to be confirmed.

Puente said the causes of the crash were unknown. He called it "a truly strange" incident because it happened on a flat stretch of track that had been renovated in May. He also said the train that jumped the track was less than four years old. That train belonged to the private company Iryo, while the second train, which took the brunt of the impact, belonged to Spain's public train company Renfe.

Iryo issued a statement saying it "deeply lamented what has happened" and that it was working with authorities to manage the situation.

According to Puente, the back part of the first train derailed and crashed into the head of the other train, knocking its first two carriages off the track and down a four-meter (13-foot) slope. He said the worst damage was to that front section of the Renfe train.



Europa Press via AP

Passengers wait in the hall of Madrid train station on Sunday, following the announcement of the suspension of service due to an accident in which two trains derailed in Cordoba.

When asked by reporters how long an inquiry into the crash's causes could take, he said it could be a month.

Andalusia's regional health chief, Antonio Sanz, said that 73 injured passengers have been taken to six different hospitals. Some of

Francisco Carmona, the firefighter chief of Cordoba, told Spanish national radio RNE that one of the trains was badly mangled, with at least four wagons off the rails.

The situation at the crash site "is very serious," Sanz said. "We have a very difficult night ahead."

Salvador Jiménez, a journalist for Spanish broadcaster RTVE, was on board one of the derailed trains and told the network by phone that "there was a moment when it felt like an earthquake and the train had indeed derailed."

He said passengers used emergency hammers to break the windows, and that some had walked away without serious injuries. Videos from people on site show some people crawling out of windows at some points to escape the wreckage with carriages leaning at an angle.

The incident occurred in the early evening, and hundreds of survivors had to be rescued in the darkness.

The regional Civil Protection chief, María Belén Moya Rojas, told Canal Sur the accident happened in an area that is hard to reach.

Local people were taking blankets and water to the scene to help the victims, she said.

High-speed trains, running on an extensive national network, are a popular way to travel in Spain.

Spain's military emergency relief units joined the deployment of other rescue units. The Red Cross also provided support to healthcare officials.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a post on X that she was following "the terrible news" from Cordoba.

"Tonight you are in my thoughts," she wrote in Spanish.

ADIF said train services between Madrid and cities in Andalusia would not run on Monday.

IN SUMMARY

Mayor: Soldiers would be unconstitutional

MINNEAPOLIS — Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey says sending active duty soldiers to Minnesota for an immigration crackdown is ridiculous and unconstitutional. He is urging protesters to remain peaceful. Protests have been ongoing since the Department of Homeland Security increased immigration enforcement in the Twin Cities. President Donald Trump had threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act but has since backed off. A federal judge ruled that immigration officers can't detain or tear gas peaceful protesters and nearly all of the demonstrations have not seen violence. Postal workers marched against ICE on Sunday and some hotels protesters say housed ICE agents were not accepting reservations.

Wildfires race across Chile

PENCO, Chile — Authorities in Chile say that wildfires raging across central and southern areas of the country have left at least 18 people dead. The flames have scorched thousands of acres of forest and destroyed scores of homes. The South American country is sweltering under a heat wave. Chilean President Gabriel Boric declared a state of catastrophe on Sunday in the country's hard-hit central Biobio region and the neighboring Ñuble region around 500 kilometers or 300 miles south of the capital Santiago. More than two dozen wildfires raced across those areas and ravaged 8,500 hectares or 21,000 acres. About 50,000 people were forced to evacuate.

Lawsuits: Missteps made Eaton Fire more deadly

ALTADENA, Calif. — Southern California Edison has filed lawsuits against Los Angeles County, local water agencies and the Southern California Gas Company. The utility claims a series missteps made last year's Eaton Fire more deadly. The fire started on Jan. 7, 2025, and killed 19 people and destroyed more than 9,400 homes. It took nearly a month to extinguish. SoCal Edison claims county agencies failed to send timely evacuation warnings and that water agencies didn't provide enough water for firefighters. They also blame SoCalGas for delayed gas shutoffs. The cause remains under investigation, but evidence suggests one of the utility's idled power lines might have ignited the fire.

Video shows fires in Palestinian village

JERUSALEM — Video obtained by The Associated Press shows the moment that Israeli settlers set fire to a Palestinian village in the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority's Jerusalem governorate said Sunday that dozens of settlers descended on the small Bedouin hamlet of Khirbet al-Sidra in the Israeli-occupied West Bank overnight. It came as at least five more countries said they had been invited to join U.S. President Donald Trump's Board of Peace. An Israeli minister also said that he'd given notice to disconnect the water and electricity for facilities for the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA.

Syrian government announces ceasefire

RAQQA, Syria — The Syrian government has announced a ceasefire with the Syrian Democratic Forces, taking almost full control of the country. The move Sunday dismantles the Kurdish-led forces that controlled the northeast for over a decade. Tensions between government forces and the SDF boiled over earlier this month, leading to a major push toward the east. The SDF appears to have largely retreated after initial clashes. Syria's Defense Ministry says it ordered the fighting to halt. The agreement includes dismantling the SDF and having its forces join Syria's military. There is no clear timeline on when the agreement will go into effect.

— *Associated Press*

On standby



AP Photo

A person holds an upside-down American flag as law enforcement stands during a protest outside the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building on Saturday in Minneapolis.

Sources: Army makes 1,500 soldiers available for possible deployment

By Konstantin Toropin
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has ordered about 1,500 active duty soldiers to be ready in case of a possible deployment to Minnesota, where federal authorities have been conducting a massive immigration enforcement operation, two defense officials said Sunday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military plans, said two infantry battalions of the Army's 11th Airborne Division have been given prepare-to-deploy orders. The unit is based in Alaska and specializes in operating in arctic conditions.

One defense official said the troops are standing by to deploy to Minnesota should President Donald Trump invoke the Insurrection Act, a rarely used 19th-century law that would allow him to employ active duty troops as law enforcement.

The move comes just days after Trump threatened to do just that to quell protests against his administration's immigration crackdown.

See SOLDIERS | 13A

Europe warns of 'dangerous downward spiral'

Trump threatens tariffs over Greenland

By Stefanie Dazio, Jill Lawless and Emma Burrows
The Associated Press



Trump

BERLIN — The eight European countries targeted by U.S. President Donald Trump for a 10% tariff for opposing American control of Greenland blasted the move Sunday, warning that his threats "undermine transatlantic relations and risk a dangerous downward spiral."

The joint statement by some of America's closest allies signaled a possible turning point in the recent tensions over sovereignty and security nearly 24 hours after Trump's threat.

It was also the most forceful rebuke of Trump from the European allies since he returned to the White House almost a year ago. In recent months, Europeans have mostly opted for diplomacy and flattery around him, even when seeking an end to the war in Ukraine. Sunday's statement, as well as some European countries sending troops to Greenland for a Danish military training exercise, appeared to be a step away from that strategy.

The unusually strong joint statement from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland said troops sent to Greenland for operation "Arctic Endurance" pose "no threat to anyone."

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen told reporters in Oslo that a dialogue was opened with the U.S. last week and "we will not give up on that. ... So we will stay on track — unless U.S. decides differently."

Added Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide at the same news conference: "We will not allow ourselves to be put under

See EUROPE | 13A

Soldiers

From page 12A

In an emailed statement, Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell did not deny the orders were issued and said the military "is always prepared to execute the orders of the Commander-in-Chief if called upon."

ABC News was the first to report the development.

On Thursday, Trump said in a social media post that he would invoke the 1807 law "if the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don't obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job."

He appeared to walk back the threat a day later, telling reporters at the White House that there wasn't a reason to use it "right now."

"If I needed it, I'd use it," Trump said. "It's very powerful."

Trump has repeatedly threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act throughout both of his terms. In 2020, he threatened to use it to quell protests after George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police, and in recent months, he threatened to use it for immigration protests.

The law was most recently invoked by President George H.W. Bush in 1992 to end unrest in Los Angeles after the acquittal of four white police officers in the beating of Rodney King.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a Democrat and frequent target of Trump, has urged the president to refrain from sending in more troops.

"I'm making a direct appeal to the President: Let's turn the temperature down. Stop this campaign of retribution. This is not who we are," Walz said last week on social media.



AP Photo

Law enforcement detain a man outside the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building during a protest Saturday in Minneapolis.

Europe

From page 12A

pressure, and those types of threats (of U.S. tariffs) are unacceptable between close allies,"

Six of the countries targeted are part of the 27-member European Union, which operates as a single economic zone in terms of trade.

Following emergency talks among the EU's national envoys Sunday, EU Council President Antonio Costa said the bloc's leaders agree "that tariffs would undermine transatlantic relations and are incompatible with the EU-U.S. trade agreement."

They expressed "readiness to defend ourselves against any form of coercion," Costa said in a statement. He is expected to convene a summit of the bloc's leaders later this week.



Mads Claus Rasmussen/Ritzau Scanpix via AP

Danish soldiers disembark at the harbor in Nuuk, Greenland, on Sunday.

Solidarity with Denmark, Greenland

Trump's Saturday announcement sets up a potentially dangerous test of U.S. partnerships in Europe. He appeared to indicate that he was using the tariffs as leverage to force talks over the status of Greenland, a semiautonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark that he regards as critical to U.S. national security.

"We stand in full solidarity with the Kingdom of Denmark and the people of Greenland," the group said. "Building on the process begun last week, we stand ready to engage in a dialogue based on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that we stand firmly behind. Tariff threats undermine transatlantic relations and risk a dangerous downward spiral."

There are immediate questions about how the White House could implement tariffs against the EU. It was unclear, too, how Trump could act under U.S. law, though he could cite emergency economic powers that are currently subject to a U.S. Supreme Court challenge.

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said China and Russia will benefit from divisions between the U.S. and Europe. She added on social media: "If Greenland's security is at risk, we can address this inside NATO.."

Europe has been trying to keep Trump on its side to ensure U.S. support for Ukraine, including Washington sharing intelligence with Kyiv and its involvement in security guarantees if a peace agreement is reached with Russia.

Rasmus Søndergaard, a senior researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies, called Trump's announcement "unprecedented" because tariff threats normally stem from trade disagreements, not territorial disputes between allies.

"That's of course why we're seeing the response from European countries saying 'enough is enough,'" he told The Associated Press. "I think there's in part probably a strategic calculation, of course, from the governments in these countries that if you give in to Trump on this, what will be the next thing? And at some point you have to sort of push back."

Søndergaard also said Trump leveled the playing field for Europe with the tariff threat. Europeans cannot compete militarily, but the EU can wield an economic weapon through reciprocal tariffs.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte wrote on social media Sunday that he'd spoken with Trump. Rutte has been criticized in recent days for largely sidestepping questions about Trump and Greenland and any NATO tensions over the island.

"We will continue working on this, and I look forward to seeing him in Davos later this week," Rutte said.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer also spoke to Trump and told him that "applying tariffs on allies for pursuing the collective security of NATO allies is wrong," a Downing Street spokeswoman said. That call followed conversations with Rutte, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Trump's move was also panned domestically.

U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, an Arizona Democrat, said Trump's threatened tariffs on U.S. allies would make Americans "pay more to try to get territory we don't need."

"Troops from European countries are arriving in Greenland to defend the territory from us. Let that sink in," Kelly said on social media. "The damage this President is doing to our reputation and our relationships is growing, making us less safe. If something doesn't change we will be on our own with adversaries and enemies in every direction."

Former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said he supports the United States ultimately owning Greenland, but not how Trump is trying to accomplish it.

He said he had concerns whether Trump had the constitutional authority to impose unilateral tariffs on NATO allies, as well as about a threat of a military invasion. Trump's current position threatens "to fracture that strong relationship, not just with Denmark, but with all of our NATO allies," Pence said on CNN's "State of the Union."

Trump's populist allies criticize tariff threat

The tariff announcement also drew blowback from Trump's populist allies in Europe.

Italy's right-wing premier, Giorgia Meloni, considered one of Trump's closest allies on the continent, said she had spoken to him about the tariffs, which she described as "a mistake."

The deployment to Greenland of small numbers of troops by some European countries was misunderstood by Washington, Meloni said, adding it was not a move against the U.S. but aimed to provide security against "other actors" that she didn't identify.

Jordan Bardella, president of Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party in France and a European Parliament lawmaker, posted that the EU should suspend last year's tariff deal with the U.S., describing Trump's threats as "commercial blackmail."

Trump also achieved the rare feat of uniting Britain's main political parties — including the hard-right Reform UK party — all of whom criticized the tariff threat.

Also in London on Sunday, a heckler yelled "leave Greenland alone!" while Vanessa Williams sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" before an NBA game between Memphis and Orlando. The outburst drew scattered laughs and applause.







Research: Tylenol doesn't raise risk of autism

By Laura Ungar
The Associated Press

A new review of studies has found that taking Tylenol during pregnancy doesn't increase the risk of autism, ADHD or intellectual disabilities — adding to the growing body of research refuting claims made by the Trump administration.

President Donald Trump last year promoted unproven ties between the painkiller and autism, telling pregnant women: "Don't take Tylenol."

The latest research review, published Friday in The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynecology & Women's Health, looked at 43 studies and concluded that the most rigorous ones, such as those that compare siblings, provide strong evidence that taking the drug commonly known as paracetamol outside of the U.S. does not cause autism, ADHD or intellectual disabilities.

It's "safe to use in pregnancy," said lead author Dr. Asma Khalil. "It remains ... the first line of treatment that we would recommend if the pregnant woman has pain or fever."

While some studies have raised the possibility of a link between autism risk and using Tylenol, also known as acetaminophen, during pregnancy, more haven't found a connection.

A review published last year in BMJ said existing evidence doesn't clearly link the drug's use during pregnancy with autism or ADHD in offspring. A study published the previous year in the Journal of the American Medical Association also found it wasn't associated with children's risk of autism, ADHD or intellectual disability in an analysis looking at siblings.

But the White House has focused on research supporting a link.

One of the papers cited on its web page, published in BMC Environmental Health last year, analyzed results from 46 previous studies and found that they supported evidence of an association between Tylenol exposure during pregnancy and increased incidence of neurodevelopmental disorders. Researchers noted that the drug is still important for treating pain and fever during pregnancy, but said steps should be taken to limit its use.

Some health experts have raised concerns about that review and the way Trump administration officials portrayed it, pointing out that only a fraction of the studies focus on autism and that an association doesn't prove cause and effect. Khalil, a fetal medicine specialist at St. George's Hospital, London, said that review included some studies that were small and some that were prone to bias.

The senior author of that review was Dr. Andrea Baccarelli, dean of the faculty at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, who noted in the paper that he served as an expert witness for plaintiffs in a case involving potential links between acetaminophen use during pregnancy and neurodevelopmental disorders. Baccarelli did not respond to an email seeking comment on his study.

Overall, Khalil said, research cited in the public debate showing small associations between acetaminophen and autism is vulnerable to confounding factors. For example, a pregnant woman might take Tylenol for fevers, and fever during pregnancy may raise the risk for autism. Research can also be affected by "recall bias," such as when the mother of an autistic child doesn't accurately remember how much of the drug she used during pregnancy after the fact, Khalil said.

When researchers prioritize the most rigorous study approaches — such as comparing siblings to account for the influence of things like genetics — "the association is not seen," she said.

Genetics are the biggest risk factor for autism, experts say. Other risks include the age of the child's father, preterm birth and whether the mother had health problems during pregnancy.

In a commentary published with the latest review, a group of researchers who weren't involved — from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Children's Hospital Colorado and elsewhere —cautioned that discouraging the use of acetaminophen during pregnancy could lead to inadequate pain or fever control. And that may hurt the baby as well as the mother. Untreated fever and infection in a pregnant woman poses "well-established risks to fetal survival and neurodevelopment," they said.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for all content.



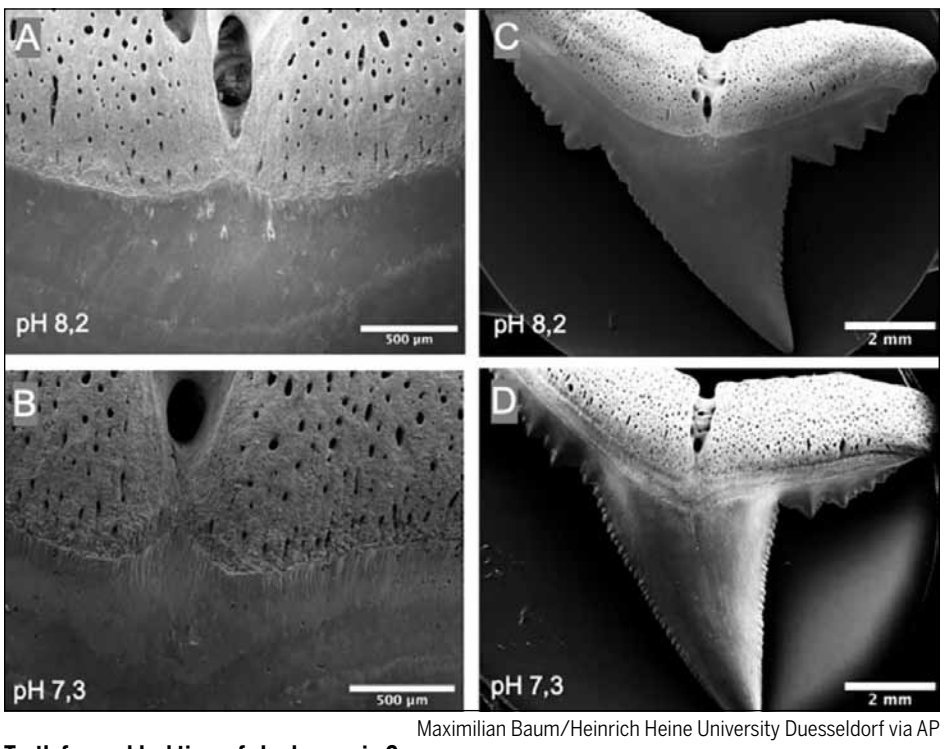
Maximilian Baum/Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf via AP

A blacktip reef shark swims at Sealife Oberhausen in Oberhausen, Germany.

Bad dental hygiene?

Sharks are famous for fearsome teeth, but ocean acidification could make them weaker

By Patrick Whittle
The Associated Press



Maximilian Baum/Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf via AP

Teeth from a blacktip reef shark, seen in Germany.

PORTLAND, Maine — Sharks are the most feared predators in the sea, and their survival hinges on fearsome teeth that regrow throughout their lives. But changes in the ocean's chemistry could put those weapons at risk.

That is the takeaway from a study performed by a group of German scientists who tested the effects of a more acidic ocean on sharks' teeth. Scientists have linked human activities, including the burning of coal, oil, and gas, to the ongoing acidification of the ocean.

As oceans become increasingly acidic, sharks' teeth could become structurally weaker and more likely to break, the scientists found. That could change the big fish's status at the top of the ocean's food chain, they wrote.

The ocean will not become populated with toothless sharks overnight, said the study's lead author, Maximilian Baum, a marine biologist at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. But the possibility of weaker teeth is a new hazard to sharks that already face pollution, overfishing, climate change, and other threats, Baum said.

"We found there is a corrosion effect on sharks' teeth," Baum said. "Their whole ecological success in the ocean as the rulers of other populations could be in danger."

Changes could come gradually

The researchers, who published their work in the journal Frontiers in Marine Science, performed their study as ocean acidification has become an increasing focus of conservation scientists.

Acidification occurs when oceans absorb more carbon dioxide from the air, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has said. The ocean is expected to become almost 10 times more acidic than it currently is by the year 2300, the German scientists wrote.

The scientists performed their study by collecting more than 600 discarded teeth from an aquarium that houses blacktip reef sharks, a species of shark that lives in the Pacific and Indian oceans and typically grows to about 5.5 feet long. They then exposed the teeth to water with the acidity of today and the projected acidity of 2300.

The teeth exposed to the more acidic water became much more damaged, with cracks and holes, root corrosion, and degradation to the structure of the tooth itself, the scientists wrote.

The results "show that ocean acidification will have significant effects on the morphological properties of teeth," the scientists wrote.

Still the ocean's top predator

Shark teeth are "highly developed weapons built for cutting flesh, not resisting ocean acid," Baum said. Sharks will go through thousands of teeth in a lifetime, and the teeth are critical for allowing sharks to regulate populations of fish and marine mammals in the oceans.

Many sharks are also facing extinction jeopardy, as more than a third of shark species are currently threatened with extinction according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Thankfully, sharks have a number of factors that can help them stave off the negative effects of ocean acidification, said Nick Whitney, senior scientist at the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium.



Maximilian Baum/Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf via AP

A blacktip reef shark swims at Sealife Oberhausen in Oberhausen, Germany.

Whitney, who was not involved in the study, said the scientists' work on the shark teeth was sound. However, because shark teeth develop inside the mouth tissue of sharks, they will be shielded from changes in ocean chemistry for a time, he said.

And history has taught us that sharks are survivors, Whitney said.

"They've been around for 400 million years and have evolved and adapted to all kinds of changing conditions," he said.

Ocean acidification could be a concern, but overfishing remains the biggest threat to sharks, said Gavin Naylor, director of the Florida Program for Shark Research at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

Acidification will bring many changes

Naylor and others cautioned that ocean acidification is indeed going to pose many threats to the ocean beyond just sharks. Ocean acidification is expected to be especially harmful to shellfish such as oysters and clams because it will make it more difficult for them to build shells, NOAA has said.

It could also make fish scales weaker and more brittle. It's tough to say now whether that could ultimately benefit the sharks that feed on them, Naylor said.

For now, ocean acidification can't be disregarded as a threat facing sharks, Baum said. Some shark species could come close to extinction in the coming years, and ocean acidification could be one of the factors causing that to happen, he said.

"The evolutionary success of sharks is dependent on their perfectly developed teeth," Baum said.

Winter weather hits Midwest, East Coast

Snow could fall in Florida

By Juan A. Lozano
The Associated Press



AP Photo

A protective coating of ice clings to ornamental plants in sub-freezing temperatures at a business Friday in Plant City, Fla.



AP Photo

Icicles cling to some vines along a barbed wire fence at an ornamental plant business in sub-freezing temperatures Friday in Plant City, Fla.

HOUSTON — A blast of winter weather brought snowfall and subfreezing wind chills across the Midwest and East Coast on Saturday as well as near-freezing temperatures in parts of the South, including normally balmy Florida.

In northeastern Ohio, sudden bursts of heavy snow and gusty winds created whiteout conditions, according to the National Weather Service. Snow squall conditions moved into the Cleveland metro area and were expected to continue east into Pennsylvania and parts of eastern New York.

"Expect visibilities of less than a quarter of a mile and rapid snow accumulation on roadways. Travel will be difficult and possibly dangerous in the heavy snow," the National Weather Service warned.

Below-average temperatures in the Central and Eastern U.S. were predicted for the weekend and into early next week.

"The next few nights are forecast to be very cold for much of the Central and Eastern United States," the Weather Prediction Center, part of the National Weather Service, said. "Sub-zero wind chills are forecast from the Plains to the Midwest and Northeast, with the coldest wind chills expected in the Upper Midwest on Sunday night."

"Impactful snowfall" was forecast to begin late Saturday up and down the East Coast, from the western Florida Panhandle to Maine, according to the prediction center. Snow was expected to blanket Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island by Sunday night, with some areas getting up to 4 inches of snow.

Meanwhile, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida were expected to have near-freezing temperatures at least through the weekend.

In Tallahassee, Florida, there could be some snowfall Sunday morning, according to the National Weather Service. But it should not last long.

"So here in Tallahassee, the likelihood of any snow accumulation is not zero, but it's very low. I mean the ground will be just too warm for anything to stick and accumulate," said Kristian Oliver, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's office in Tallahassee.

It would be the second time in as many years that the state has seen snow: In January 2025, up to 10 inches fell in parts of the Panhandle, part of a record-breaking snowstorm that impacted the Deep South, including other normally snow-free places like Houston and New Orleans.

"On average, we have an event like this maybe every few years. But having two back-to-back, I'd say, is pretty anomalous for the area," Oliver said.

Up to 3 inches was forecast for central Georgia south of Atlanta, with the heaviest snowfall expected between 6 a.m. and 11 a.m.

"Plan on slippery roads during the snow, as well as on Sunday night into Monday morning as remaining water/snow refreezes," the National Weather Service's Atlanta office said.

Be Brilliant™

The speech clarity you need.
The hearing aid features you want.

signia



With typical hearing aids, speech often competes with environmental sounds, making it dificult to focus on what you want to hear. New Insio Charge&Go AX with Augmented Focus™ can separate speech from noise to help you better understand speech in quiet, mild and loud environments.[1] **And for the irst time, this technology is available in a custom in-the-ear it with Bluetooth® connectivity and contactless rechargeability.**

$250 TRADE-IN CREDIT
RISK-FREE, 30 DAY TRIAL
ZERO OBLIGATION
Introductory offers available now!

Improved Speech in Noise[2] · Custom Design · iPhone and Android Connectivity · Contactless Charging · Better Than Normal Hearing[2] · Budget Friendly Options



POWER TO HEAR ALL DAY

New Smallest Rechargeable hearing aids. The Invisible Silk Charge&Go IX can be charged on the go with a sleek, pocket-sized case with integrated power bank that provides up to four additional charges and can be charged wirelessly (Qi) for added convenience.

accutone HEARING SERVICES Est 1996
IT SOUNDS BETTER

365 Bennett St
Luzerne PA 18704
570-287-6609

Find us online at accutonehearingservices.com
or Follow Us on Facebook
Following CDC Guidelines for Covid-19

Calling all Brides!

RECENTLY MARRIED? - SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US



ARE YOU GETTING MARRIED
OR HAVE RECENTLY CELEBRATED YOUR BIG DAY?

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US!

Go to timesleader.com/callingallbrides or email dmcgee@timesleader.com with your submission

TIMES LEADER
115 YEARS STRONG

Abstract World LLC
FULL SERVICE TITLE COMPANY
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

570-338-5027

480 Pierce St.
New Bridge Center Suite 117
Kingston, PA 18704

Donald James Ide - Owner
License 1099578
An Independent Agent for First American Title Company

Rx FAMILY PRESCRIPTION COUNTER

335 Main St Duryea, PA 18642 · P: 570-457-6789 · F: 570-451-3154
Monday - Friday: 8A.M. - 7P.M. · Saturday: 8A.M. - 3P.M. · Sunday: 9A.M. - 12P.M.
81004344



AP Photo

Panama's President Jose Raul Mulino, from left, Bolivian President Rodrigo Paz, European Council President Antonio Costa, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Paraguay's President Santiago Pena, Argentina's President Javier Milei, Uruguay's President Yamandu Orsi and Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mauro Vieira, pose for a group photo during a meeting to sign a free trade deal between the European Union and Mercosur in Asuncion, Paraguay, on Saturday.

EU, South American nations sign free trade agreement

By Nayara Batschke and Isabel Debre
The Associated Press

ASUNCION, Paraguay — The European Union and the Mercosur bloc of South American countries formally signed a long-sought free trade agreement on Saturday, strengthening commercial ties in the face of rising protectionism and trade tensions around the world.

The signing ceremony in Paraguay's capital, Asuncion, caps more than a quarter-century of torturous negotiations. It marks a major geopolitical victory for the EU in an age of American tariffs and surging Chinese exports, expanding the bloc's foothold in a resource-rich region increasingly contested by Washington and Beijing.

It also sends a message that South America is keeping a range of trade and diplomatic relationships even as U.S. President Donald Trump makes an aggressive push for geopolitical dominance of the Western Hemisphere.

The agreement could still face hurdles in the EU parliament, which must ratify it before it can take effect. Ratification is considered all but guaranteed in South America, where the agreement has broad support.

Mercosur consists of the region's two biggest economies, Argentina and Brazil, as well as Paraguay and Uruguay. Bolivia, the bloc's newest member, is not included the trade deal but could join in the coming years. Venezuela has been suspended from the bloc and isn't included in the agreement.

Supported by South America's cattle-raising countries and European industrial interests, the accord will gradually eliminate more than 90% of tariffs on goods ranging from Argentine beef to German cars, creating one of the world's largest free trade zones and making shopping cheaper for more than 700 million consumers.

Leaders call deal a win over protectionism

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who heads the EU's executive branch, portrayed the deal as a bulwark against the disruptive policies of the Trump administration.

"It reflects a clear and deliberate choice: We choose fair trade over tariffs. We choose a productive long-term partnership over isolation," von der Leyen declared in an veiled rebuke of Trump at the ceremony, which got underway as Trump announced 10% tariffs on eight European nations over their opposition to American control of Greenland.



AP Photo

Economic Security Maros Sefcovic, left front, and Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mauro Vieira greet each other during a meeting to sign a free trade deal between the European Union and Mercosur in Asuncion, Paraguay, on Saturday.

"We will join forces like never before, because we believe that this is the best way to make our people and our countries prosper," she added.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a longtime advocate of the trade deal, hailed it as a victory for global cooperation.

"At a time when unilateralism isolates markets and protectionism inhibits global growth, two regions that share democratic values and a commitment to multilateralism choose a different path," Lula posted on X.

EU demanded more concessions for farmers

But Lula skipped the signing ceremony, signaling simmering tensions between the trading blocs.

Brazil, which held the rotating presidency of Mercosur last year, was gearing up to host the signing ceremony last month when European countries called it off, demanding more concessions for farmers scared of a surge in cheap agricultural imports.

Robbed of the spotlight, Lula was outraged at what was widely seen in South America as the latest example of the EU's overbearing demands.

One of the main reasons the deal took so long to clinch was Brussels' demands for controls on South American agricultural processes, from deforestation regulation to rules on plastic packaging, as European farmers complained they couldn't compete if their South American counterparts were held to lower standards.

"The EU's maximalist wish lists of demands from developing economies willing to sign free trade agreements are often perceived as patronizing," said Agathe Demarais, a senior policy fellow with the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Some European farmers hope to block ratification

After the accord incorporated environmental regulations, strict quotas on farm imports like beef and sugar and staggered timelines for tariff reductions, the EU sweetened the deal further for its farmers with a promise of hefty subsidies. That pushed agricultural powerhouse Italy across the line earlier this month.

But even as the ink dried on Saturday, powerful lobbies in Europe were still hoping to prevent the agreement from clearing its main final hurdle: ratification by the European Parliament.

France remains opposed to the accord, with President Emmanuel Macron worrying that farmers' frustration with the EU could drive more voters to the country's far right in the 2027 presidential election.

In an interview, EU trade commissioner Maroš Šefčovič said he'd start lobbying Monday to get European Parliament members on board with the deal in hopes of seeing it passed in the first half of this year.

"We'll have very intense communication with all the members on a group level, on an individual level," Šefčovič told The Associated Press, expressing confidence that "everyone will do the procedures as quickly as possible so we can benefit from this historic achievement."

Šefčovič didn't name Trump, but as the U.S. threatens higher tariffs the commissioner said the accord sent the message "that if someone prefers and believes in high tariffs and power politics, Mercosur and European countries representing more than 700 million people clearly believe in ... international law, predictability, certainty and the removing of trade barriers."

A revived Mercosur wins over skeptical Milei

The deal is a sign of the bloc's revived relevance after years in which it was embroiled in political spats, undermined by economic crises and constrained by protectionist governments.

Perhaps most striking is the enthusaism of Argentine President Javier Milei, a radical libertarian and admirer of Trump who shares the U.S. leader's contempt for global institutions like the United Nations. Milei came to office in late 2023 with nothing but scorn for Mercosur, trashing it as a "prison," threatening to withdraw and skipping the 2024 summit.

But his enthusiasm for free trade overcame any skepticism of the bloc at Saturday's ceremony.

"Argentina understands firsthand that closure and protectionism, sheltered by rhetoric rather than results, are the greatest causes of economic stagnation," he said before signing.











BOX OFFICE

‘28 Years Later: The Bone Temple’ opens strongly

By Lindsey Bahr
The Associated Press



Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures via AP

Ralph Fiennes in a scene from ‘28 Years Later: The Bone Temple.’

“28 Years Later: The Bone Temple” may have scored well with critics, but slightly more moviegoing audiences chose to spend the holiday weekend catching up with “Avatar: Fire and Ash.” James Cameron’s epic topped the North American box office charts for the fifth straight weekend with $13.3 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. The Walt Disney Co. also celebrated another win as their Thanksgiving release “Zootopia 2” became the highest grossing animated Motion Picture Association release of all time.

Meanwhile “The Bone Temple,” directed by Nia DaCosta, landed in second place with $13 million through Sunday. By the end of Monday’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, it’s expected to be at $15 million, still trailing “Avatar’s” projected $17.2 million. The film, released by Sony Pictures and starring Ralph Fiennes and Jack O’Connell, opened wide this weekend in 3,506 theaters on a wave of hype and strong reviews. It currently has a 93% on Rotten Tomatoes, and 72% of audiences said in a PostTrak poll that they would “definitely recommend” the movie. Considering it’s also solidly in the horror genre and arriving in January, often a dumping ground for lesser movies, “The Bone Temple” should have done better. Internationally, it made $16.2 million from 61 markets.

But perhaps in a case of too much too soon, the sequel also comes less than a year after the previous installment, “28 Years Later,” which opened to $30 million in June. Going into the weekend, “The Bone Temple” was expected to make at least $20 million through Monday. With a reported $63 million production budget, not including marketing and promotion, it also has a long journey to break even.

“It’s one of those head-scratchers,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Comscore. “There may be a little bit of confusion from audiences. But word-of-mouth might sustain it in this marketplace, like we saw with ‘The Housemaid’ and ‘Zootopia 2.’”

Danny Boyle and Alex Garland, the team who started it all with “28 Days Later,” which came out in 2002, are also working on a third installment.

Third place went to “Zootopia 2,” with $8.8 million in its eighth weekend. With global grosses currently at $1.7 billion, it surpassed “Inside Out 2” as the highest grossing MPA animated release of all time. The MPA distinction means that the Chinese blockbuster “Ne Zha 2,” which has made over $2.2 billion, is not included in the rankings. “Zootopia 2” is also now the ninth biggest global release of all time

“The Housemaid,” one of the other major blockbusters of late, landed in fourth place with $8.5 million. Made for only $35 million, the Lionsgate release has grossed nearly $250 million worldwide.

Rounding out the top five was “Marty Supreme,” which became A24’s highest grossing North American release with a running gross of $79.7 million, unseating “Everything Everywhere All at Once.” Josh Safdie’s mid-century adrenaline rush may get another boost after Oscar nominations are announced Thursday.

“Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring” and “The Two Towers” were also back in theaters this weekend and both in the top 10, grossing $3.6 million and $2.4 million respectively.

Outside of the top 10, Focus Features’ “Hamnet,” which won best drama and best female actor for Jessie Buckley at the Golden Globes last weekend and is considered another top Oscar contender, expanded to 718 locations this weekend where it made $1.3 million through Sunday.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

With final domestic figures being released Tuesday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore:

1. “Avatar: Fire and Ash,” $13.3 million.
2. “28 Years Later: The Bone Temple,” $13 million.
3. “Zootopia 2,” $8.8 million.
4. “The Housemaid,” $8.5 million
5. “Marty Supreme,” $5.5 million.
6. “Primate,” $5 million.
7. “Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring,” $3.6 million.
8. “Greenland 2: Migration,” $3.4 million.
9. “Anaconda,” $3.2 million.
10. “Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers,” $2.4 million.

READ MORE
Movie Review: ‘28 Years Later: The Bone Temple’ is a bonkers and triumphant zombie movie, **Entertainment Monday 7C**.

Everything you need, close to home

- Auto Loans
- Mortgages
- Mobile Deposit
- Express Pay



P&G
Mehoopany Employees Federal Credit Union
Federally insured by NCUA

pgmfcu.org
570-675-3370

WBRE WYOU

TODAY'S FORECAST



Valerie Smock

Meteorologist
WBRE/WYOU

Snow showers are possible on Monday with an otherwise partly sunny sky. It'll be windy with gusts to 30 or 40 mph. High temperatures will be in the upper 20s. A blast of Arctic air will get here Monday night and stay through Wednesday morning.

Tuesday will start in the single digits, and temperatures will struggle to reach the upper teens. It will remain windy for another day. Wind chills will be below zero on Tuesday morning, and it will not make it out of the single digits throughout the day.

Wednesday morning will be in the single digits, but it will be in the upper 20s by the afternoon. Thursday will be warmer with afternoon temperatures in the lower 30s. Snow showers are likely on Thursday. As we wrap up the week, sun and clouds will return, but so will the cold. Highs on Friday will be in the mid-20s, then it's the low-20s for both Saturday and Sunday.

NEPA WEATHER

AccuWeather® Proven **Superior Accuracy™** Visit AccuWeather.com

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
30 / 10	21 / 9	33 / 30	34 / 11	28 / 8	17 / 0	21 / 9
Breezy with periods of sun	Very cold with some sun	Not as cold	Breezy in the morning	A little afternoon snow	Very cold	Mostly cloudy and cold

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:25 a.m.
Sunset today	5:04 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:11 a.m.
Moonset today	5:59 p.m.

First	Full	Last	New
Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 9	Feb 17

WEATHER HISTORY

Snow is rare in Florida. It did not fall in Miami Beach until 1977; however, on Jan. 19, snowflakes fell for the first time at the famous resort.

ALMANAC

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport through 3 p.m. Sunday

TEMPERATURES

High	30
Low	26
Normal high	35
Normal Low	20
Record high	60 (2006)
Record low	-7 (1982)

PRECIPITATION

24-hour total	0.19″
Month to date	0.80″
Normal m-t-d	1.56″
Year to date	0.80″
Normal y-t-d	1.56″

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

Degree days are an indicator of energy needs. The more the total degree days, the more energy is necessary to heat.

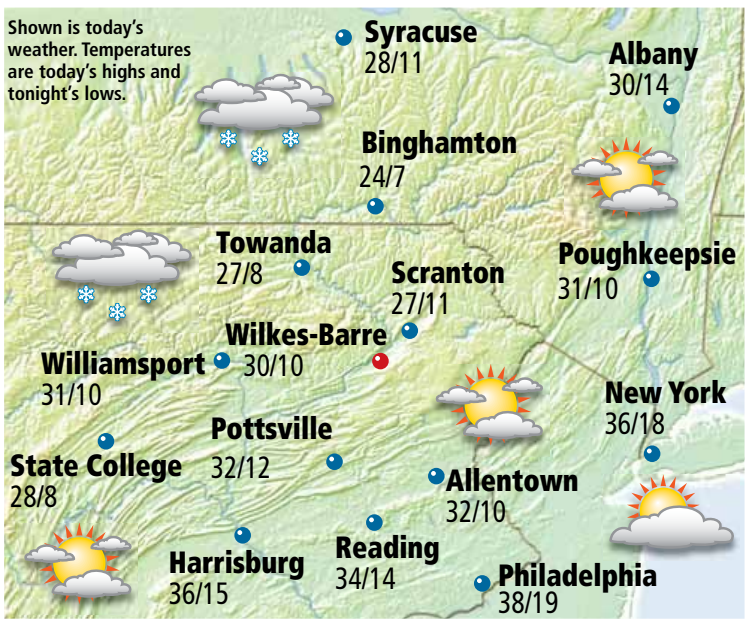
Sunday	37
Month to date	609
Season to date	2940
Last season to date	2711
Normal season to date	2791

RIVER LEVELS

In feet as of 7 a.m. Sunday.

Susquehanna	Stage	Chg	Fld Stg
Wilkes-Barre	6.72	-0.70	22
Towanda	4.26	-0.65	16
Lehigh			
Bethlehem	1.69	-0.05	16
Delaware			
Port Jervis	3.41	-0.41	18

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2026



NEW YORK CITY

High: 36. **Low:** 18. Partial sunshine today; breezy during the afternoon. Mainly clear and windy tonight. Mostly sunny and colder tomorrow.

PHILADELPHIA

High: 38. **Low:** 19. Breezy today with sun and some clouds. Partly cloudy and windy tonight. Breezy and colder tomorrow with plenty of sunshine.

POCONOS

Highs: 21 to 27. **Lows:** 3 to 9. Increasingly windy today with partial sunshine. Mainly clear and windy tonight.

FINGER LAKES

Highs: 25 to 31. **Lows:** 8 to 14. Mainly cloudy and breezy today with a bit of snow, accumulating up to an inch. A snow shower tonight. Clouds and sun tomorrow.

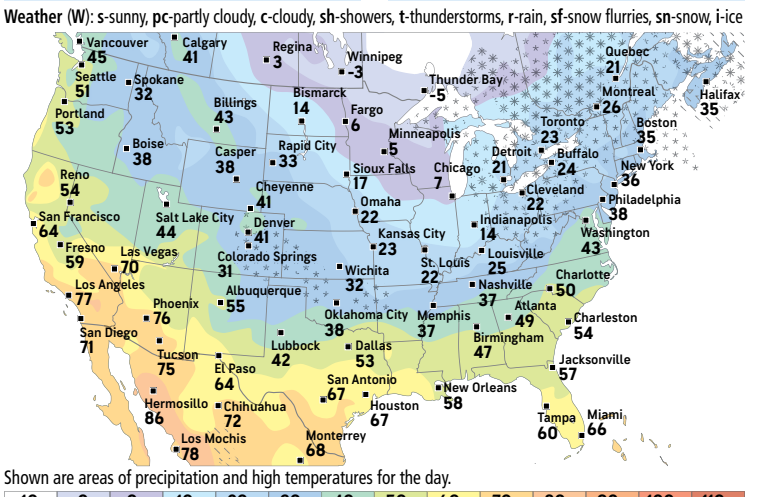
JERSEY SHORE

Highs: 36 to 42. **Lows:** 18 to 24. Mostly sunny and windy today. Partly cloudy and windy tonight. Sunny, windy and colder tomorrow. Wednesday: mostly sunny and not as cold.

NATIONAL WEATHER

	Today Hi/Lo/W	Tuesday Hi/Lo/W		Today Hi/Lo/W	Tuesday Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	49/26/s	45/30/s	Milwaukee	6/0/pc	15/13/c
Baltimore	41/18/pc	29/13/s	Nashville	37/17/s	41/27/s
Billings	43/32/pc	38/24/sn	New Orleans	58/41/s	54/44/s
Boston	35/19/sn	26/14/s	Norfolk	46/27/s	37/25/s
Buffalo	24/7/sn	14/11/sf	Oklahoma City	38/19/s	49/34/s
Charlotte	50/25/s	46/24/s	Orlando	59/40/s	67/45/pc
Chicago	7/2/pc	20/18/pc	Phoenix	76/49/pc	77/49/s
Cleveland	22/5/sn	17/10/pc	Pittsburgh	25/5/sf	17/12/pc
Dallas	53/30/pc	53/47/pc	Portland, ME	31/14/sf	21/7/s
Denver	41/26/sn	54/25/pc	Portland, OR	53/30/s	51/34/pc
Detroit	21/7/sn	17/11/c	Sacramento	56/39/s	60/37/s
Honolulu	82/63/pc	82/63/c	St. Louis	22/15/s	42/33/s
Houston	67/43/s	61/54/c	San Francisco	64/48/s	65/49/s
Indianapolis	14/8/s	26/23/pc	Seattle	51/36/s	51/35/pc
Las Vegas	70/42/s	65/38/s	Washington, DC	43/21/pc	31/19/s

Weather (W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice



Shown are areas of precipitation and high temperatures for the day.

-10s	-0s	0s	10s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s	80s	90s	100s	110s
Showers		T-storms		Rain		Flurries		Snow		Ice			

Summary: Much of the country will be dry today as the Great Plains and Midwest turn colder. Lake-effect snow will continue across the Great Lakes as snow comes to an end early in New England.



INDIANA, MIAMI CLASH FOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TONIGHT • PAGE 6B

Sports Monday

contact us >> sports@timesleader.com



IN MEMORY

Joseph J. Soprano Jr.

Times Leader executive editor

Penn State graduate 1988

Conference finals set

BEARS RALLY TO TIE LATE BEFORE RAMS WIN IN OT

PAGE 3B

PATRIOTS FORCE FIVE TURNOVERS TO BEAT TEXANS

PAGE 4B

Rams running back Kyren Williams leaps into the end zone for a go-ahead touchdown in Sunday's NFC Divisional Round game in Chicago. The Bears would end up tying the game on a fourth-down prayer in the final minute, but Los Angeles came up with an interception in overtime to set up a field goal for a 20-17 win. The Rams will travel to Seattle for the NFC Championship. (Jeff Roberson | AP photo)

AUSTRALIAN OPEN PLAY GETS UNDERWAY • PAGE 10B



BASIC WASH - $8
Unlimited monthly pass $24.99 (Wash, dry)
WORKS WASH- $10
Unlimited monthly pass $29.99
(Basic plus, Underbody wash, sealer wax)
ULTIMATE WASH - $14
Unlimited monthly pass $39.99
(Works plus, triple foam, rust inhibitor, hot wax shine)
LAVA SHIELD WASH - $18 Unlimited monthly pass $49.99
(Ultimate plus lava shield wax, paint sealant, waterfall rinse & cure)

Hours:
Mon – Sun 8am to 8pm
spring thru summer
Mon – Sun 8am to sundown
fall thru winter
Full service available
10am – 6pm everyday
Weather may affect the schedule*
2384 Memorial Highway
Dallas, PA

LOCAL SCHEDULE

MONDAY
AHL
Penguins at Springfield, 3:05 p.m.
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
(7:15 p.m. unless noted)
Hazleton Area at Wyoming Valley West
Hanover Area at Lake-Lehman
MMI Prep at Holy Redeemer, 6 p.m.
Nanticoke Area at Wyoming Seminary
Pittston Area at Dallas
Tunkhannock at Wyoming Area
Wilkes-Barre Area at Crestwood

TUESDAY
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
(7:15 p.m.)
Crestwood at Wilkes-Barre Area
Dallas at Pittston Area
Holy Redeemer at MMI Prep
Lake-Lehman at Hanover Area
Wyoming Area at Tunkhannock
Wyoming Seminary at Berwick
Wyoming Valley West at Hazleton Area
H.S. WRESTLING
Pittston Area at Benton, 7 p.m.
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Nanticoke Area at Lake-Lehman, 4:30 p.m.
Wyoming Valley West at Wyoming Area, 4 p.m.
Pittston Area at Wilkes-Barre Area, 4 p.m.
Holy Redeemer at Berwick, 4:30 p.m.
Wyoming Seminary at Tunkhannock, 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
AHL
Belleville at Penguins, 7:05 p.m.
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
Wilkes-Barre Area at Lackawanna Trail, 5:30 p.m.
H.S. WRESTLING
(7 p.m.)
Berwick at Hanover Area
Lake-Lehman at Wyoming Area
Tunkhannock at Dallas
Crestwood at Hazleton Area
Wilkes-Barre Area at Nanticoke Area
Pittston Area at Wyoming Valley West

THURSDAY
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
(7:15 p.m. unless noted)
Dallas at Berwick
Hazleton Area at Pittston Area
Holy Redeemer at Lake-Lehman
Nanticoke Area at Tunkhannock
Wyoming Area at MMI Prep, 6 p.m.
Wyoming Seminary at Hanover Area
Wyoming Valley West at Crestwood
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Tunkhannock at Lake-Lehman, 6:30 p.m.
Hazleton Area at Berwick, 4:30 p.m.
Holy Redeemer at Wyoming Seminary, 4:30 p.m.

FRIDAY
AHL
Penguins at Hershey, 7 p.m.
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
(7:15 p.m. unless noted)
Crestwood at Wyoming Valley West
Hanover Area at Wyoming Seminary, 6 p.m.
Lake-Lehman at Holy Redeemer
MMI Prep at Wyoming Area
Nanticoke Area at Dallas
Pittston Area at Hazleton Area
Tunkhannock at Berwick
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
Wilkes-Barre Area at Lehigh Valley Academy, 4:30 p.m.
H.S. WRESTLING
Berwick, Crestwood, Nanticoke Area, Pittston Area at Coal Cracker Tournament, Lehighton HS
Tunkhannock at Ultimate Warrior Tournament, West Branch HS
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Wyoming Area at Pittston Area, 4 p.m.

SATURDAY
AHL
Charlotte at Penguins, 6:05 p.m.
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
Western Wayne at Wyoming Seminary, 2:15 p.m.
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
Columbia-Montour Vo-Tech at Hanover Area, 1 p.m.
MMI Prep at Weatherly, noon
North Schuylkill at Pittston Area, 2:30 p.m.
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Hazleton Area at Williamsport, 11 a.m.

SUNDAY
No events scheduled

SPORTS ON TV

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN)
11 a.m.
CBSSN — Northeastern at Monmouth
1 p.m.
CBSSN — Drexel at Towson
ESPNU — Vermont at Albany (N.Y.)
3 p.m.
CBSSN — Saint Joseph's at VCU
5 p.m.
CBSSN — George Washington at George Mason
6 p.m.
FS1 — Providence at Marquette
7 p.m.
CBSSN — Loyola (Md.) at Lehigh
9 p.m.
CBSSN — NC A&T at Hampton
COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN)
Noon
FOX — Ohio State vs. TCU, Newark, N.J.
2:30 p.m.
FOX — Michigan vs. Vanderbilt, Newark, N.J.
5 p.m.
FOX — Notre Dame at UConn
COLLEGE FOOTBALL
7:45 p.m.
ACCN — CFP National Championship: Miami vs. Indiana, Miami (Field Pass with ACC Huddle)
ESPN — CFP National Championship: Miami vs. Indiana, Miami
ESPN2 — CFP National Championship: Miami vs. Indiana, Miami (Field Pass with The Pat McAfee Show)
ESPNEWS — CFP National Championship: Miami vs. Indiana, Miami (SkyCast)
ESPNU — CFP National Championship: Miami vs. Indiana, Miami (Film Room)
ECHL
7 p.m.
NHLN — 2026 Warrior/ECHL All-Star Classic Stars vs. Stripes, Allen, Texas
GOLF
2 p.m.
GOLF — Korn Ferry Tour: The The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic, Second Round, The Abaco Club on Winding Bay, North Abaco, Bahamas
HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL (BOYS)
11 a.m.
ESPN2 — Dynamic Prep (Texas) vs. Prolific Prep (Fla.)
1 p.m.
ESPN2 — St. Mary's (Ariz.) vs. Paul VI (Va.)
3 p.m.
ESPNU — St. John Bosco (Calif.) vs. Columbus (Fla.)
5 p.m.
ESPNU — Spire Academy (Ohio) vs. Brewster Academy (N.H.)
NBA
1 p.m.
PEACOCK — Milwaukee at Atlanta
2:30 p.m.
NBC — Oklahoma City at Cleveland
5 p.m.
NBC — Dallas at New York
7 p.m.
NBCSP — Indiana at Philadelphia
7:30 p.m.
YES — Phoenix at Brooklyn
8 p.m.
NBC — Boston at Detroit
NHL
1:30 p.m.
TNT, TRUTV — Buffalo at Carolina
4 p.m.
TNT, TRUTV — Washington at Colorado
5 p.m.
SNP — Pittsburgh at Seattle
8 p.m.
NBCSP+ — Philadelphia at Vegas
SOCCER (MEN)
3 p.m.
USA — English Premier League: AFC Bournemouth at Brighton & Hove Albion
TENNIS
11 a.m.
TENNIS — ATP/WTA: The Australian Open, First Round, Melbourne, Australia
11:15 p.m.
ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The Australian Open, First Round, Melbourne, Australia
3 a.m. (Tuesday)
ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The Australian Open, First Round, Melbourne, Australia
UNRIVALED BASKETBALL
8 p.m.
TNT, TRUTV — Breeze vs. Mist, Miami
9:15 p.m.
TNT, TRUTV — Vinyl vs. Lunar Owls, Miami

LATEST LINE

College Football
Monday
CFP National Championship
Miami Gardens, Fla.

FAVORITE	OPEN	TODAY	O/U	UNDERDOG
Indiana	7½	7½	(47½)	Miami (FL)

NBA
Monday

FAVORITE	LINE	O/U	UNDERDOG
at ATLANTA	2½	(230½)	Milwaukee
Oklahoma City	6½	(234½)	at CLEVELAND
LA Clippers	7	(223½)	at WASHINGTON
at NEW YORK	10½	(230½)	Dallas
at SAN ANTONIO	15½	(240½)	Utah
at PHILADELPHIA	8½	(228½)	Indiana
Phoenix	7½	(218½)	at BROOKLYN
at DETROIT	3½	(223½)	Boston
at GOLDEN STATE	6½	(237½)	Miami

COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Monday

FAVORITE	LINE	UNDERDOG
at MONMOUTH	3½	Northeastern
Stonehill	1½	at SAINT FRANCIS (PA)
Vermont	5½	at ALBANY (NY)
at TOWSON	6½	Drexel
UMBC	5½	at BINGHAMTON
at MARIST	7	Merrimack
at HARVARD	4½	Pennsylvania
at YALE	8½	Columbia
at FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON	1½	Wagner
at QUINNIPIAC	12½	Manhattan
Sacred Heart	3½	at RIDER
at SIENA	6½	Fairfield
Cornell	1½	at BROWN
at MAINE	1½	New Hampshire
at NJIT	1½	Bryant
Cent. Conn. St.	1½	at MERCYHURST
at SAINT PETER'S	3½	Iona
Mount St. Mary's	2½	at NIAGARA
LIU	1½	at LE MOYNE
at VCU	15½	Saint Joseph's (PA)
McNeese	7½	at TEXAS A&M-CC
at ALABAMA STATE	1½	Alabama A&M
at GEORGE MASON	3½	George Washington
at DARTMOUTH	1½	Princeton
at MARQUETTE	1½	Providence
at INCARNATE WORD	9½	East Texas A&M
Bethune-Cookman	2½	at UAPB
at LEHIGH	5½	Loyola (MD)
New Haven	1½	at CHICAGO STATE
SFA	3½	at NICHOLLS STATE
at UT RIO GRANDE VALLEY	5½	SE Louisiana
Montana	4½	at NORTHERN ARIZONA
Lamar	1½	at NEW ORLEANS
Prairie View A&M	1½	at ALCORN STATE
at NORTHERN COLORADO	2½	Montana State
Florida A&M	12½	at MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
at HOUSTON CHRISTIAN	2½	Northwestern State
at JACKSON STATE	1½	Texas Southern
at HAMPTON	5½	N.C. A&T

NHL
Monday

FAVORITE	LINE	UNDERDOG	LINE
at CAROLINA	-198	Buffalo	+164
at COLORADO	-216	Washington	+178
Pittsburgh	-125	at SEATTLE	+104
at FLORIDA	-191	San Jose	+158
at TORONTO	-123	Minnesota	+103
at VEGAS	-209	Philadelphia	+172
Winnipeg	-140	at CHICAGO	+118
New Jersey	-126	at CALGARY	+105
at ANAHEIM	-137	N.Y Rangers	+115
New York	-143	at VANCOUVER	+120

For the latest odds, go to BetMGM Sportsbook

NFL

NFL Playoff Glance
Wild-card Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 10
L.A. Rams 34, Carolina 31
Chicago 31, Green Bay 27
Sunday, Jan. 11
Buffalo 27, Jacksonville 24
San Francisco 23, Philadelphia 19
New England 16, L.A. Chargers 3
Monday, Jan. 12
Houston 30, Pittsburgh 6
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 17
Denver 33, Buffalo 30, OT
Seattle 41, San Francisco 6
Sunday, Jan. 18
New England 28, Houston 16
L.A. Rams 20, Chicago 17, OT
Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 25
AFC
New England at Denver, 3 p.m. (CBS/Paramount+)
NFC
L.A. Rams at Seattle, 6:30 p.m. (FOX)
Super Bowl LIX
Sunday, Feb. 8
At Santa Clara.
Conference Championships winners, 6:30 p.m. (NBC/Peacock)

SUNDAY'S GAMES
AFC Divisional Round
New England 28, Houston 16

Houston	**3**	**7**	**6**	**0**	**— 16**
New England	**7**	**14**	**0**	**7**	**— 28**

First Quarter
NE—Douglas 28 pass from Maye (Borregales kick), 9:35.
Hou—FG Fairbairn 25, 5:26.
Second Quarter
Hou—Kirk 10 pass from Stroud (Fairbairn kick), 12:51.
NE—M.Jones 26 interception return (Borregales kick), 10:31.
NE—Diggs 7 pass from Maye (Borregales kick), 3:12.
Third Quarter
Hou—FG Fairbairn 25, 9:45.
Hou—FG Fairbairn 51, 1:32.
Fourth Quarter
NE—Boutte 32 pass from Maye (Borregales kick), 12:58.
A—64,628.

	Hou	NE
First downs	16	13
Total Net Yards	241	248
Rushes-yards	22-48	32-105
Passing	193	143
Punt Returns	3-29	4-53
Kickoff Returns	4-88	4-89
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	4-26
Comp-Att-Int	20-47-4	16-27-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-19	5-36
Punts	5-58.8	8-41.625
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	4-2
Penalties-Yards	4-32	3-48
Time of Possession	27:51	32:09

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Houston, Marks 14-17, Chubb 4-14, Stroud 2-11, Stover 2-6. New England, Stevenson 16-70, Henderson 12-25, Maye 4-10.
PASSING—Houston, Stroud 20-47-4-212. New England, Maye 16-27-1-179.
RECEIVING—Houston, Higgins 6-59, Hutchinson 4-44, H.Bryant 3-21, Schultz 2-47, Kirk 2-20, Marks 2-19, Stover 1-2. New England, Diggs 4-40, Stevenson 4-11, Boutte 3-75, Douglas 2-36, Hooper 1-14, H**enry 1-5, Henderson 1-(minus 2).**
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

NFC Divisional Round
L.A. Rams 20, Chicago 17, OT

L.A. Rams	**7**	**3**	**0**	**7**	**3 — 20**
Chicago	**0**	**10**	**0**	**7**	**0 — 17**

First Quarter
LAR—K.Williams 4 run (Mevis kick), 6:20.
Second Quarter
Chi—Moore 3 pass from Ca.Williams (Santos kick), 14:55.
Chi—FG Santos 48, 1:10.
LAR—FG Mevis 32, :00.
Fourth Quarter
LAR—K.Williams 5 run (Mevis kick), 8:50.
Chi—Kmet 14 pass from Ca.Williams (Santos kick), :18.
First Overtime
LAR—FG Mevis 42, 3:19.
A—60,253.

	LAR	Chi
First downs	22	23
Total Net Yards	340	417
Rushes-yards	31-111	39-160
Passing	229	257
Punt Returns	0-0	3-33
Kickoff Returns	4-88	2-58
Interceptions Ret.	3-14	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	20-42-0	23-42-3
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-29	0-0
Punts	8-47.5	3-47.0
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	1-5	3-24
Time of Possession	32:26	39:15

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—L.A. Rams, K.Williams 21-87, Corum 6-19, Nacua 2-6, Whittington 1-0, Stafford 1-(minus 1). Chicago, Swift 19-76, Ca.Williams 5-40, Monangai 13-36, Moore 1-8, Burden 1-0.
PASSING—L.A. Rams, Stafford 20-42-0-258. Chicago, Ca.Williams 23-42-3-257.
RECEIVING—L.A. Rams, Nacua 5-56, K.Williams 4-30, Parkinson 3-56, Whittington 2-35, Adams 2-24, Mumpfield 2-11, Higbee 1-27, Ferguson 1-19. Chicago, Moore 5-52, Loveland 4-56, Monangai 4-36, Kmet 3-31, Burden 3-24, Odunze 2-44, Zaccheaus 1-9, Smythe 1-5.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

SATURDAY'S GAMES
AFC Divisional Round
Denver 33, Buffalo 30, OT

Buffalo	**7**	**3**	**7**	**13**	**0 — 30**
Denver	**3**	**17**	**3**	**7**	**3 — 33**

First Quarter
Den—FG Lutz 28, 7:29.
Buf—Hardman 4 pass from J.Allen (Prater kick), :11.
Second Quarter
Den—Crum 7 pass from Nix (Lutz kick), 9:33.
Buf—FG Prater 33, 2:13.
Den—Humphrey 29 pass from Nix (Lutz kick), :29.
Den—FG Lutz 50, :00.
Third Quarter
Den—FG Lutz 33, 11:35.
Buf—Coleman 10 pass from J.Allen (Prater kick), 6:57.
Fourth Quarter
Buf—Kincaid 14 pass from J.Allen (Prater kick), 13:29.
Buf—FG Prater 31, 4:11.
Den—Mims 26 pass from Nix (Lutz kick), 1:01.
Buf—FG Prater 50, :05.
First Overtime
Den—FG Lutz 23, 4:44.
A—77,043.

	Buf	Den
First downs	28	22
Total Net Yards	449	349
Rushes-yards	36-183	22-70
Passing	266	279
Punt Returns	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns	6-152	6-136
Interceptions Ret.	1-3	2-30
Comp-Att-Int	25-39-2	26-46-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-17	0-0
Punts	0-0.0	4-47.0
Fumbles-Lost	5-3	1-0
Penalties-Yards	5-68	3-20
Time of Possession	40:58	29:18

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Buffalo, Cook 24-117, Allen 12-66. Denver, Nix 12-29, McLaughlin 4-21, Harvey 6-20.
PASSING—Buffalo, Allen 25-39-2-283. Denver, Nix 26-46-1-279.
RECEIVING—Buffalo, Shakir 7-75, Kincaid 6-83, Knox 3-32, R.Davis 2-33, Cook 2-24, Cooks 2-20, Coleman 1-10, Hardman 1-4, Samuel 1-2. Denver, Mims 8-93, Harvey 5-46, Sutton 4-53, Bryant 3-32, Humphrey 2-33, Badie 1-7, Crum 1-7, Engram 1-7, Adkins 1-1.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

NFC Divisional Round
Seattle 41, San Francisco 6

San Francisco	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**— 6**
Seattle	**17**	**7**	**10**	**7**	**— 41**

First Quarter
Sea—Shaheed 95 kickoff return (Myers kick), 14:47.
Sea—FG Myers 31, 5:06.
Sea—Smith-Njigba 4 pass from Darnold (Myers kick), 1:50.
Second Quarter
SF—FG Pineiro 40, 11:58.
SF—FG Pineiro 56, 4:32.
Sea—Walker 7 run (Myers kick), :31.
Third Quarter
Sea—FG Myers 24, 7:07.
Sea—Walker 15 run (Myers kick), 2:23.
Fourth Quarter
Sea—Walker 6 run (Myers kick), 12:43.
A—68,579.

	SF	Sea
First downs	15	19
Total Net Yards	236	281
Rushes-yards	27-108	33-175
Passing	128	106
Punt Returns	2-4	0-0
Kickoff Returns	5-114	2-126
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	1-0
Comp-Att-Int	17-31-1	12-17-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-16	2-18
Punts	1-51.0	3-49.667
Fumbles-Lost	3-2	0-0
Penalties-Yards	3-36	2-5
Time of Possession	28:49	31:11

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—San Francisco, Purdy 5-37, McCaffrey 11-35, James 6-28, Jones 1-7, B.Robinson 3-4, Juszczyk 1-(minus 3). Seattle, Walker 19-116, Shaheed 2-27, Charbonnet 5-20, V.Jones 6-10, Barner 1-2.
PASSING—San Francisco, Purdy 15-27-1-140, Jones 2-4-0-4. Seattle, Darnold 12-17-0-124.
RECEIVING—San Francisco, Tonges 5-59, McCaffrey 5-39, Jennings 2-23, Juszczyk 1-11, James 1-7, B.Robinson 1-3, Farrell 1-1, D.Robinson 1-1. Seattle, Kupp 5-60, Walker 3-29, Smith-Njigba 3-19, Bobo 1-16.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

NBA

NBA Glance
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	26	15	.634	—
New York	25	17	.595	1½
Toronto	25	18	.581	2
Philadelphia	22	18	.550	3½
Brooklyn	12	28	.300	13½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	23	19	.548	—
Miami	22	20	.524	1
Atlanta	20	24	.455	4
Charlotte	16	27	.372	7½
Washington	10	31	.244	12½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	30	10	.750	—
Cleveland	24	19	.558	7½
Chicago	20	22	.476	11
Milwaukee	17	24	.415	13½
Indiana	10	33	.233	21½

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	29	13	.690	—
Houston	25	15	.625	3
Memphis	18	23	.439	10½
Dallas	17	26	.395	12½
New Orleans	10	35	.222	20½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	35	8	.814	—
Denver	29	14	.674	6
Minnesota	27	16	.628	8
Portland	21	22	.488	14
Utah	14	28	.333	20½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	24	16	.600	—
Phoenix	25	17	.595	—
Golden State	24	19	.558	1½
L.A. Clippers	18	23	.439	6½
Sacramento	12	30	.286	13

Saturday's Games
Dallas 138, Utah 120
Boston 132, Atlanta 106
Detroit 121, Indiana 78
Phoenix 106, New York 99
San Antonio 126, Minnesota 123
Miami 122, Oklahoma City 120
Golden State 136, Charlotte 116
Denver 121, Washington 115
Portland 132, L.A. Lakers 116
Sunday's Games
Memphis 126, Orlando 109
Chicago 124, Brooklyn 102
Houston 119, New Orleans 110
Charlotte 110, Denver 87
Portland at Sacramento, late
Toronto at L.A. Lakers, late
Monday's Games
Milwaukee at Atlanta, 1 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Cleveland, 2:30 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Washington, 3 p.m.
Dallas at New York, 5 p.m.
Utah at San Antonio, 5 p.m.
Indiana at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Phoenix at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Boston at Detroit, 8 p.m.
Miami at Golden State, 10 p.m.
Tuesday's Games
Phoenix at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Chicago, 8 p.m.
San Antonio at Houston, 8 p.m.
Minnesota at Utah, 9 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Denver, 10 p.m.
Miami at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
Toronto at Golden State, 10 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
Cleveland at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Brooklyn at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Detroit at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Milwaukee, 9:30 p.m.
Toronto at Sacramento, 10 p.m.

NHL

NHL Glance
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	47	30	13	4	64	166	120
Detroit	50	30	16	4	64	157	153
Montreal	49	27	15	7	61	168	164
Boston	49	28	19	2	58	164	150
Buffalo	47	26	16	5	57	157	148
Toronto	48	24	16	8	56	162	158
Florida	47	25	19	3	53	145	156
Ottawa	48	22	19	7	51	159	163

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	49	30	15	4	64	171	144
N.Y. Islanders	48	26	17	5	57	141	134
Pittsburgh	47	22	14	11	55	150	144
Washington	49	24	19	6	54	157	143
Philadelphia	47	22	17	8	52	141	149
Columbus	48	22	19	7	51	148	160
New Jersey	48	24	22	2	50	127	149
N.Y. Rangers	49	21	22	6	48	132	150

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	46	33	5	8	74	185	110
Dallas	49	27	13	9	63	163	139
Minnesota	49	27	13	9	63	155	140
Utah	49	25	20	4	54	153	135
Nashville	48	23	21	4	50	138	161
St. Louis	49	19	22	8	46	120	168
Chicago	48	19	22	7	45	133	154
Winnipeg	47	19	22	6	44	144	148

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	47	24	11	12	60	160	145
Edmonton	50	25	17	8	58	170	158
Seattle	47	21	17	9	51	130	141
San Jose	47	24	20	3	51	148	168
Anaheim	48	24	21	3	51	158	172
Los Angeles	48	19	16	13	51	125	136
Calgary	48	21	23	4	46	126	143
Vancouver	48	16	27	5	37	126	176

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.
Saturday's Games
Minnesota 5, Buffalo 4, OT
N.Y. Rangers 6, Philadelphia 3
Calgary 4, N.Y. Islanders 2
Utah 6, Seattle 3
Carolina 4, New Jersey 1
Florida 5, Washington 2
Toronto 4, Winnipeg 3, OT
Columbus 4, Pittsburgh 3, SO
Montreal 6, Ottawa 5, OT
Boston 5, Chicago 2
Edmonton 6, Vancouver 0
Vegas 7, Nashville 2
Anaheim 2, Los Angeles 1, OT
Sunday's Games
Tampa Bay 4, Dallas 1
Detroit 4, Ottawa 3, OT
Edmonton 5, St. Louis 0
Monday's Games
Buffalo at Carolina, 1:30 p.m.
Washington at Colorado, 4 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Seattle, 5 p.m.
San Jose at Florida, 6 p.m.
Minnesota at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Vegas, 8 p.m.
Winnipeg at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
New Jersey at Calgary, 9 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Anaheim, 10 p.m.
Tuesday's Games
Minnesota at Montreal, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Columbus, 7 p.m.
San Jose at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Boston at Dallas, 7:30 p.m.
Buffalo at Nashville, 8 p.m.
St. Louis at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Los Angeles, 10 p.m.
New Jersey at Edmonton, 10 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
Detroit at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Anaheim at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Philadelphia at Utah, 9 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Seattle, 9:30 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Calgary, 9:30 p.m.
Washington at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

AHL

AHL Glance
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Providence	36	27	8	1	0	55	121	75
Penguins	39	25	11	1	2	53	126	99
Charlotte	37	22	12	3	0	47	121	103
Lehigh Valley	37	19	14	2	2	42	102	103
Hershey	36	18	14	3	1	40	101	104
Bridgeport	36	16	17	2	1	35	109	115
Hartford	37	14	18	4	1	33	99	123
Springfield	37	13	18	4	2	32	98	136

North Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Laval	38	22	13	1	2	47	118	100
Syracuse	38	21	14	2	1	45	123	98
Toronto	39	21	15	1	2	45	123	131
Rochester	37	19	13	4	1	43	123	117
Belleville	41	17	18	6	0	40	136	151
Cleveland	36	17	14	4	1	39	92	102
Utica	36	11	18	4	3	29	87	115

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Central Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Grand Rapids	36	30	3	2	1	63	131	66
Chicago	36	18	9	4	5	45	109	104
Manitoba	36	19	14	3	0	41	96	105
Rockford	40	16	20	2	2	36	116	132
Texas	39	16	19	3	1	36	103	123
Milwaukee	35	16	16	2	1	35	104	104
Iowa	38	10	24	3	1	24	80	123

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Ontario	39	25	12	1	1	52	130	109
Colorado	36	24	8	1	3	52	123	85
Bakersfield	37	21	10	6	0	48	132	117
Coachella Val.	37	21	12	4	0	46	130	119
San Jose	36	21	12	1	2	45	113	115
Tucson	35	17	12	6	0	40	115	111
San Diego	36	16	12	6	2	40	103	100
Calgary	40	15	15	8	2	40	105	135
Henderson	35	16	14	3	2	37	110	106
Abbotsford	39	12	21	3	3	30	82	135

Saturday's Games
Manitoba 3, Laval 0
Hershey 4, Charlotte 3
Utica 3, Rochester 0
Penguins 4, Hartford 1
Bridgeport 4, Springfield 1
Grand Rapids 2, Milwaukee 0
Toronto 5, Iowa 4
Providence 5, Cleveland 0
Syracuse 4, Lehigh Valley 1
Chicago 5, Rockford 2
Ontario 4, Texas 3
Colorado 3, Henderson 0
Coachella Valley 4, San Diego 0
San Jose 4, Tucson 3
Sunday's Games
Bakersfield 1, Calgary 0
Providence 6, Cleveland 2
Charlotte 4, Hershey 3
Belleville 5, Utica 4
Rockford 6, Chicago 5
Colorado 4, Henderson 1
Texas 3, Ontario 1
Coachella Valley 3, Abbotsford 0
Monday's Games
Lehigh Valley at Bridgeport, 1 p.m.
Rochester at Syracuse, 1 p.m.
Penguins at Springfield, 3:05 p.m.
Tuesday's Games
Hartford at Hershey, 7 p.m.
San Diego at Tucson, 8:30 p.m.
Laval at Abbotsford, 10 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
Chicago at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
Milwaukee at Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
Belleville at Penguins, 7:05 p.m.
Texas at Iowa, 8 p.m.
San Diego at Tucson, 8:30 p.m.
Colorado at Bakersfield, 9:30 p.m.
San Jose at Coachella Valley, 9:30 p.m.
Laval at Abbotsford, 10 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

Sunday's Transactions
BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
National League
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Agreed to terms with RHP Cade Cavalli on a one-year contract.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
NHL — Vegas Golden Knights acquired D Rasmus Andersson from the Calgary Flames for D Zach Whitecloud, D Abram Wiebe, a 2027 first-round pick and a conditional 2027 second-round pick.
BOSTON BRUINS — Recalled D Billy Sweezey from Providence (AHL) under emergency conditions. Designated D Henri Jokiharju as a non-roster player.
NEW YORK RANGERS — Recalled LW Anton Blidh from Hartford (AHL).
PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Recalled F Lane Pederson from Lehigh Valley (AHL). Placed F Rodrigo Abols on injured reserve.
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS — Recalled F Joona Koppanen from Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (AHL). Reinstated F Rutger McGroarty from injured reserve and assigned him to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Reinstated F Dylan Holloway from injured reserve.
S



Jeff Roberson | AP photo

Rams kicker Harrison Mevis, center, reacts with holder Ethan Evans, center right, and teammates after booting a game-winning field goal during overtime on Sunday.

Rams shake off wild TD pass by Williams to force OT, beat Bears

By Andrew Seligman
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO — Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams survived an incredible throw by Caleb Williams that forced overtime, beating the Chicago Bears 20-17 on Sunday night to advance to the NFC championship game.

Harrison Mevis kicked a 42-yard field goal in OT after Kam Curl intercepted a deep pass by Williams on the Bears' first possession of the extra period. Stafford completed a 16-yard pass to Puka Nacua to get the Rams into field-goal range and set up Mevis, known as the "Thiccer Kicker," for the game-ending kick. He was mobbed by teammates while a crowd that was rocking earlier watched in near silence.

The Rams (14-5) will visit NFC West rival Seattle next Sunday in their first trip to the conference championship game since the 2021 team won the Super Bowl. The Seahawks beat San Francisco 41-6 on Saturday.

"It was crazy," Stafford said. "It was back and forth. We didn't play our best on offense. Our defense dominated the game. It was unbelievable to watch. Hell of a play on fourth down by Caleb to get his team to overtime. And just glad we got the ball back."

Los Angeles led 17-10 in the final minute and the Bears faced fourth-and-4 from the 14-yard line when Williams backpedaled to avoid the pass rush and heaved the ball to Cole Kmet for the tying touchdown with 18 seconds left. Although officially a 14-yard pass, the ball traveled 51.2 yards in the air, according to the NFL's Next Gen Stats.

Williams threw for two touchdowns but was intercepted three times as the Bears (12-7) — who pulled off seven fourth-quarter comeback wins under first-year coach Ben Johnson — came up short this time. They won the NFC North after finishing last in the division a year ago.

Stafford led a 91-yard touchdown drive in the fourth quarter, with Kyren Williams scoring from the 5 to give the Rams a 17-10 lead with 8:50 remaining. Nacua kept the possession going on the previous play with a 2-yard run on fourth-and-5.

The Bears then drove to the 2, but Omar Speights broke up Williams' fourth-down pass to Luther Burden just inside the goal line.

Chicago got the ball back at midfield with just under two minutes remaining after Ethan Evans shanked a 33-yard punt, setting up Williams' heroics.

In overtime, the Bears won the toss and deferred. They quickly got the ball back when the Rams went three-and-out, forced to punt after Blake Corum was stopped for a 1-yard loss on third-and-1 at the 36.

Chicago took over at the 16. Williams kept the drive going with a 3-yard keeper on fourth-and-1 near midfield. But Curl picked off Williams' pass intended for DJ Moore two plays later.

Stafford was 20 of 42 for 258 yards and took four sacks. Nacua had 56 yards receiving after going for 111 in a wild-card win over Carolina, and Kyren Williams ran for 87 yards and two scores.

Caleb Williams completed 23 of 42 passes for 257 yards. Moore had a touchdown catch, and D'Andre Swift ran for 76 yards.

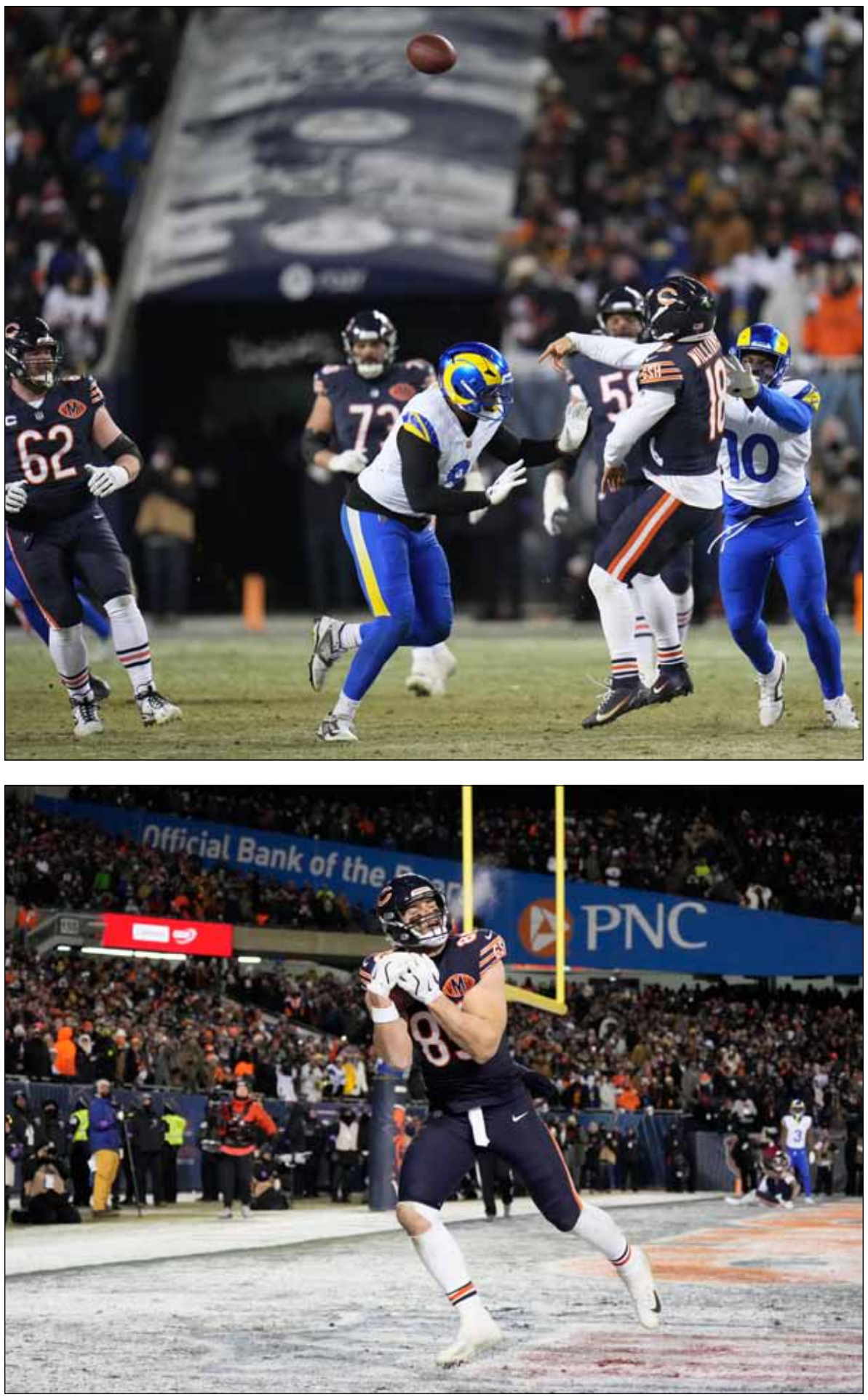
INJURIES

Rams: CB Emmanuel Forbes Jr. (shoulder) was hurt in the first half.

UP NEXT

Rams: Face Seattle for the third time this season. The teams split their earlier meetings.

Bears: Prepare for next season.



Jeff Roberson, Nam Y. Huh | AP photos

Bears quarterback Caleb Williams (top photo) was 26 yards behind the line of scrimmage when he heaved up this fourth-down pass for Cole Kmet (bottom photo), who hauled it in for a game-tying touchdown in the final minute of regulation.



Robert F. Bukaty | AP photo

Patriots cornerback Marcus Jones (25) returns an interception for a touchdown against wide receiver Xavier Hutchinson (19) and the Texans in the first half. The pick-six gave New England the lead for good as the Patriots finished with five takeaways to reach the AFC Championship game next Sunday at Denver.

Maye throws 3 TDs, Stroud throws 4 INTs as Patriots knock out Texans

By Kyle Hightower
AP Sports Writer



Robert F. Bukaty | AP photo

Patriots quarterback Drake Maye finished with just 179 yards passing but threw three touchdowns to improve to 2-0 in his first postseason.

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Mike Vrabel returned to New England on a mission to have the franchise playing again in meaningful games in January — as he did so often as a player.

In his first year as the head coach, he wanted to do it by building a culture of players that wanted to perform for each another. Their most complete team effort of the season has the Patriots one win from a trip to the Super Bowl.

Drake Maye threw three touchdown passes in the snow and rain, Marcus Jones returned one of C.J. Stroud's four interceptions for a score and the Patriots defeated the Houston Texans 28-16 on Sunday to advance to the AFC championship game for the first time in seven years.

The Patriots (16-3) will take on the Broncos (15-3) in Denver next Sunday, with the winner advancing to the NFL's title game in three weeks.

"Everybody's stepping up. We're using everybody. Everybody's making plays. Everybody's helping us win," said Vrabel, who won three Super Bowls as a playmaking linebacker for the Patriots. "I'm excited for these guys, but also, they're not satisfied, and I can tell that."

The Patriots — winners of 15 of their last 16 games — will make their 16th conference championship game appearance and first since their run to their sixth Super Bowl title under Bill Belichick in the 2018 season. New England has won its last nine divisional round games.

Maye finished 16 of 27 for 179 yards, but had an interception and fumbled four times, losing two in cold conditions in which snow and rain fell throughout. One of Maye's fumbles set up Houston's first touchdown.

"Just proud of the guys," Maye said. "Battled the elements. This is New England. This is what we're trying to embrace and we want to embrace all season long. Props to our defense, played a hell of a game. We've got to protect the football better, but we made enough plays to win it."

Carlton Davis III had two interceptions for New England. Craig Woodson added an interception and fumble recovery.

"They bring it every week," Maye said of his defense. "It's fun to watch. And we could help them out some more, but just proud of the guys. Enjoy this one, and we're back on the road."

The eight combined turnovers — Woody Marks also lost a fumble for Houston — were the most in a playoff game since 2015 when the Cardinals and Panthers combined for eight in the NFC championship game.

The Texans (13-6) have lost in the divisional round in three straight seasons under coach DeMeco Ryans. The franchise fell to 0-7 in this round.

"It's tough to win a game when you turn the ball over five times," Ryans said.

Stroud finished 20 of 47 with a TD pass. All of his interceptions came in the first half as he became the first player with five or more INTs and five or more fumbles in a single postseason. Will Anderson forced two fumbles for the Texans.

"I feel like I let people down," Stroud said. "I'm not happy with that. It hurts. I'm not used to it."

Leading 21-16 in the fourth quarter, the Patriots stretched their lead to 27-16 when Kayshon Boutte got behind Derek Stingley Jr. and pulled in a diving, one-hand catch in the corner of the end zone for a touchdown.

The Texans had the ball with 5:48 to play, but punted on fourth-and-18 at their own 21 with 4:18 remaining.

New England's next drive took the clock under two minutes. But the Texans turned it over on downs when Stroud's fourth-down pass to Xavier Hutchinson was batted down by Robert Spillane.

The Patriots now go back on the road, where they are 8-0 this season.

"We feel like we deserve to be here," Maye said. "I like our chances with those guys in the locker room."

EARLY ACTION

With the Patriots leading 7-3 early, a series of miscues produced the next two scores.

Maye was strip-sacked by Danielle Hunter deep in Patriots territory, but left tackle Will Campbell fell on the ball and the Patriots punted.

The Texans gave it right back when Stroud's deep pass along the sideline was intercepted by Davis III.

Maye fumbled again when he attempted to run on a busted play and had the ball stripped by Tommy Togiai and recovered by Azeez Al-Shaair. Six plays later, Stroud linked up with Christian Kirk on a 10-yard touchdown pass.

But on Houston's next drive, Stroud was rushed up the middle by K'Lavon Chaisson and he lofted a pass that was intercepted by Jones and returned for the score to put New England back in front.

Later in the quarter, the Patriots' lead increased to 21-10 when they capped a five-play, 56-yard drive with a 7-yard TD pass from Maye to Stefon Diggs.

MR. PICK-6

Jones scored on an interception return for the second time this season. It was the first of his career in the playoffs and first for New England in the postseason since Asante Samuel had one vs. Indianapolis on Jan. 21, 2007, in the AFC championship game.

INJURIES

Texans: TE Dalton Schultz (calf) left in the first quarter and didn't return. ... LG Tytus Howard limped off in the second quarter. ... TE Cade Stover left in the fourth with a knee injury and didn't return.

Patriots: LB Robert Spillane left in the first quarter with a thumb injury, but returned. ... RB TreVeyon Henderson was shaken up after a second quarter run before jogging off. ... S Craig Woodson exited after his INT with a head injury, but returned. ... RB Rhamondre Stevenson left in the second quarter with an eye issue. ... Davis injured his head in the fourth quarter.

Stidham faces biggest challenge as Broncos new QB

By Arnie Stapleton
AP Pro Football Writer



Jack Dempsey | AP photo

Broncos quarterback Jarrett Stidham warms up before Saturday's playoff win over the Bills. The backup is now leading Denver's Super Bowl hopes after starter Bo Nix suffered a broken ankle.

DENVER — Denver Broncos coach Sean Payton is convinced that backup quarterback Jarrett Stidham can double his career win total when he takes Bo Nix's place under center in the AFC championship game against the New England Patriots next week.

Although Stidham received a paucity of the practice snaps during the season, he did get some more work during the playoff bye week after the Broncos (15-3) earned the AFC's No. 1 seed.

"There'd be practices where I'm looking at (defensive coordinator) Vance (Joseph) and getting (mad) because Stiddy's making our defense look bad," Payton said. "He's very accurate. He's got a lot to his ball."

Losing a starting quarterback to injury — as the Broncos lost Nix to a broken ankle as he led them to a 33-30 overtime win against Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills on Saturday — can devastate a team and short-circuit title hopes.

Payton points to many examples of teams that overcame similar adversity such as when Jeff Hostetler famously stepped in as the starting quarterback for the New York Giants in December 1990 when Phil Simms broke his foot and led the team through the playoffs, culminating in a 20-19 win over the Buffalo Bills in Super Bowl 25.

Or when Nick Foles took over late in the season in Philadelphia when Carson Wentz tore an ACL in 2017 and led the Eagles to their first Super Bowl win, beating Tom Brady and the New England Patriots.

"I understand where it's coming from," this notion that losing a starting QB is a death knell, Payton said, "but historically speaking, all bets weren't off with Hostetler, they weren't off in Philly, when we lost (Drew) Brees midseason against the Rams and (Teddy) Bridgewater won five in a row.

"All bets can be off. (But) they weren't off for Houston this year when Davis Mills came in for (an injured C.J. Stroud) and I don't know if he lost a game."

Mills went 3-0 in three starts.

Stidham will be the seventh QB since starts began being tracked in 1950 to make his first start of a season in the playoffs, according to Sportradar. Frank Reich of the Bills is the only one to earn a win. Reich went 2-0 in place of an injured Jim Kelly in 1992, including a comeback from a 35-3 third-quarter deficit against Houston, before Kelly returned for the AFC title game.

Stidham started two games for the Raiders in 2022 and two for Denver in 2023, when he replaced a benched Russell Wilson and beat the Chargers before losing to Las Vegas. But he hasn't thrown a pass in a game since.

The playbook will certainly change for Stidham, who took just one snap this season, a kneel-down against Dallas in Week 8.

"The plan's always got to be built around the type and the skill sets of the players you're playing with," Payton said. "And so are there certain things that Bo does differently than Stiddy? Absolutely. And that's where the work begins tonight."

A fourth-round draft pick by New England out of Auburn in 2019, Stidham is largely an unknown commodity after appearing in just 20 games over six NFL seasons. But Payton has long touted his backup QB as one who could easily start for many teams.

Payton said he targeted Stidham in the draft when he was in New Orleans and watched as Stidham built his resume as Tom Brady's No. 2: "I know exactly how he was coached in New England, and then I know how (Josh) McDaniels felt about him when he brought him from New England to Vegas. And then I know reports on how he played and then we saw him play in real time," Payton said.

"But ultimately ... it's our three years here and our three years watching him day in and day out ... And so he will be ready to go and ready for the moment."

Nix will undergo surgery Tuesday in Birmingham, Alabama, but Payton demurred when asked if he had a sense of a recovery timeline or whether Nix would be back by training camp next summer.

"The surgeon gets his hands on the X-rays and so we have enough information now for everyone and the focus is now on the next week's game," Payton said.

Part of what made Payton's postgame announcement about Nix's injury so stunning was that Nix didn't leave the game after driving Denver into range for the game-winning field goal for the Broncos' first playoff win since Super Bowl 50. He even spoke with CBS in a postgame interview in which appeared eager to play in the conference championship.

When Wil Lutz trotted out for the game-winning field goal, Payton gave Nix a chest bump as he got to the sideline. Nix told him to be careful, saying his right ankle was really hurting. Payton figured it was just a sprain.

"I said you'll be fine and I tapped him in the chest again," Payton recounted. "I said just enjoy this field goal."

The on-field jubilation filtered into a locker room celebration and Payton held his postgame news conference. When he returned to his office, GM George Paton and Beau Lowery, the team's vice president of player health and performance, solemnly showed him the X-ray. Payton went right to find Nix, who was outside the locker room surrounded by family members and some teammates including Stidham.

"And I just asked him how he was doing, are you hanging in there? And as I said to you guys last night, this is a strong-minded individual," Payton said.

Payton is usually loathe to discuss injuries, such as those to wide receivers Troy Franklin (hamstring) and Pat Bryant (concussion) Saturday. But he said he decided to return to the lectern an hour after the game to deliver the news of Nix's injury because he didn't want his players to hear it from a news outlet with the big scoop before they held their team meeting Monday morning.

"I would have liked to have talked to the team first but like half of the locker room had left," Payton said.

Definition of a catch again under scrutiny after OT INT

By Rob Maaddi
AP Pro Football Writer



Jack Dempsey | AP photo

Bills receiver Brandin Cooks (right) initially had control of the ball on a critical pass downfield in overtime on Saturday, but Broncos cornerback Ja'Quan McMillian ripped it away from him as they hit the ground. The play was ruled an interception and set up Denver's winning field goal.

Hey, NFL: What's a catch?

Once again, many football fans, coaches and commentators are questioning the definition of a catch after a disputed interception helped eliminate the Buffalo Bills from the playoffs in a 33-30 loss to the Denver Broncos on Saturday.

Josh Allen's deep pass to Brandin Cooks in overtime was wrestled out of the veteran receiver's hands by Ja'Quan McMillian, and officials ruled that McMillian had the ball before Cooks was down by contact. Denver was awarded the turnover at its 20.

Cooks "was going to the ground as part of the process of the catch and he lost possession of the ball when he hit the ground," referee Carl Cheffers said in a pool report. "The defender gained possession of it at that point. The defender is the one that completed the process of the catch, so the defender was awarded the ball."

Bills coach Sean McDermott couldn't challenge the ruling because of the league's overtime rules, so he called a timeout to give the officiating crew and replay officials a chance to take an extended look. The play already had been confirmed through the NFL's expedited review process in New York, so the timeout essentially just gave McDermott an opportunity to get an explanation.

McDermott, of course, wasn't pleased. But he was even more upset by the appearance of a rushed process. There are routine plays in regular-season games that are examined more in depth on replay reviews.

"When I called the timeout ... Carl came over and those guys were great. They were great, and I said, 'Hey, what did you see?' and then quickly, somebody said: 'Hey, New York has confirmed. New York has confirmed,'" McDermott said. "From that point, it was a moot point. We were moving on. Had I not called a timeout, they were just moving on, it appeared. ... This is not about, 'Hey, we lost.' It's not about that at all. You play the game, you play it fair and square. I just, again, wish just for the sake of the players and all the time and energy that was spent — three hours, 70-plus minutes of a game. That was a pivotal play, that's all I'm saying."

By definition, it seems interception was the right call. Many folks disagree.

"I have never seen a contested catch like this ever be called anything but a catch," retired three-time All-Pro cornerback Richard Sherman posted on X. "Even as a DB you know that if it's even a (t)ie it will go to the WR. Can't believe this decided the game."

Dan Orlovsky, an ESPN analyst and longtime backup quarterback, said: "This in an NFL playoff game got ruled an interception and ended Buffalo's season?!!?? This is a catch every time."

Similar plays have been ruled both ways.

In the fourth quarter of the Rams-Bears game Sunday, Davante Adams had the ball ripped out of his hands following a 12-yard gain to Chicago's 16. But officials ruled it a catch and replay confirmed his knee was down just before he lost the ball. A few plays later, Kyren Williams gave Los Angeles a 17-10 lead with a 5-yard TD run.

There was a batted ball during a Ravens-Steelers game in Week 14 that bounced back to Aaron Rodgers but was ripped out of his hands by Teddye Buchanan, who was initially awarded an interception. But the play was overturned because it was determined that Rodgers "had control of the ball and as he was going to the ground" and "he never lost control of the ball and then his knees hit the ground in control," according to NFL vice president of instant replay Mark Butterworth.

In Week 12, Rams defensive back Cobie Durant ripped a ball out of Buccaneers tight end Cade Otton's hands while he was going down and returned it 50 yards for a score. Though Otton appeared to have a knee down, the play stood and was ruled an interception and touchdown.

This isn't the first time the NFL has dealt with a catch issue in a playoff game.

There was the Dez Bryant non-catch in a divisional-round game on Jan. 11, 2015 at Green Bay that cost Dallas. The Cowboys trailed the Packers 26-21 when Tony Romo threw a deep ball on fourth down to Bryant that initially was ruled a catch inside the 1. But the play was overturned because officials determined Bryant didn't control the ball while hitting the ground.

That led the NFL to clarify the rule and then to eventually overhaul it in 2018, when "survive the ground" was eliminated from the definition.

WHAT IS A CATCH?

Here is the full definition of a catch, according to the NFL rule book:

"A forward pass is complete (by the offense) or intercepted (by the defense) in the field of play, at the sideline, or in the end zone if a player, who is inbounds:

(a) secures control of the ball in his hands or arms prior to the ball touching the ground; and

(b) touches the ground inbounds with both feet or with any part of his body other than his hands; and

(c) after (a) and (b) have been fulfilled, clearly performs any act common to the game (e.g., extend the ball forward, take an additional step, tuck the ball away and turn upfield, or avoid or ward off an opponent), or he maintains control of the ball long enough to do so.

NOTES

(1) Movement of the ball does not automatically result in loss of control.

(2) If a player, who satisfied (a) and (b), but has not satisfied (c), contacts the ground and loses control of the ball, it is an incomplete pass if the ball hits the ground before he regains control, or if he regains control out of bounds."

The rule book also weighs in on two players catching a ball at the same time:

"If a pass is caught simultaneously by two eligible opponents, and both players retain it, the ball belongs to the passers. It is not a simultaneous catch if a player gains control first and an opponent subsequently gains joint control. If the ball is muffed after simultaneous touching by two such players, all the players of the passing team become eligible to catch the loose ball."

A catch can be complex. Sometimes it's difficult to see in real time and it can even be hard to determine on replay.

Miami-Indiana title game highlights new era for sport

By Eddie Pells
AP National Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — One program long lived with the distinction of losing more games in the history of college football than anyone. The other has enjoyed its fair share of glory and contempt — albeit all of it old enough to be packaged in grainy documentaries, or retold among the tall tales of an era long gone by.

Indiana and Miami are playing for the national title Monday night, and if that has you scratching your head thinking "Who?" or "What?" then you are not alone.

Even though a new world of paying players and rapid-fire transfers from school to school has shuffled the deck in college sports, nobody thought it would get mixed up this much. And even though both schools have been trending upward of late, both were listed as 100-1 long shots to win the championship at some point this season.

"When I got here," explained Indiana's second-year coach and turnaround artist Curt Cignetti, "I was trying to figure out if the fan base was dead or just on life support."

Who could blame them?

Before Cignetti's arrival to start the 2024 season, the Hoosiers had compiled 713 losses over 130-plus years of football. For some, buying seats for football was a wallet-squeezing requirement to gain access to tickets for the basketball games coached by Bob Knight and a string of successors — a much better team and better draw.

Cignetti, whose resume looks like a Delta Airlines departures board, arrived with virtually zero fanfare, at least on a national level.

Asked different versions of the same question time and again at a signing-day news conference in his first season that surprised many for how good it was, Cignetti landed the punch that will end up on his tombstone: "It's pretty simple. I win. Google me."

In one way, the Indiana resurgence is a product of the new era of college football, in which players get paid and move freely between schools. Cignetti started this resurgence by bringing 13 players with him from his former job, at James Madison.

In another way, this is about a coach commandeering a program and rebuilding it the old-fashioned way.

Quarterback Fernando Mendoza moved from Cal to Indiana last year because "I felt like Coach Cignetti could help me get to where it thought I could be as a quarterback." A two-star recruit out of high school, he won the Heisman Trophy this season. The Hoosiers, who call themselves the "misfits," have, at most, two four-star recruits on their roster.

"I've never looked at a star in my life," Cignetti said of the imprecise ranking system that means nothing until those players put on pads. "If a guy can play hard and has the right stuff and the intangibles, we can work with him and he'll develop."

Indiana does claim the world's largest living alumni base, several thousand of whom are gobbling up what's turning out to be potentially the toughest ticket ever for a title game that will be played on Miami's home field. They also have Mark Cuban, who has added multiple millions to the effort. Indiana's football budget has grown from $24 million to $61 million since 2021.

"It takes a village and there's money," Cignetti said. "But it's not all about money."

Same story, different blueprint at Miami

To some extent, Miami would agree with that.

This is a program with deep, colorful roots. The 2018 ESPN documentary about the Notre Dame-Miami rivalry is called "Catholics vs. Convicts." Notre Dame is the Catholic school.

Names from the '80s and '90s — Michael Irvin, Jimmy Johnson, Bernie Kosar and infamous booster Nevin Shapiro — faded away to be replaced by essentially nothing.

Not until a product of that '80s and '90s heyday, Mario Cristobal, arrived in 2021 did things start looking up again for the 'Canes.

"I thought we were a group of guys who nobody believed in who changed history by playing with unbelievable effort," Cristobal said of his old teams. "It was a little wild, a little edgy, but no one could question the brotherhood."

Like Indiana, the 'Canes are a product of the new name-image-likeness era in college football, combined with some tough love from a coach who was around long before that started.

"Absolutely zero," Cristobal said when asked what he changed as a coach once the dollars started flowing and the players started moving.

"If you have to change the way you coach because you're afraid of the portal, you're not doing it right to begin with," he said. "You have to push people, be demanding but not demeaning, don't compromise. I don't believe that has to change."

The biggest portal stories involving Miami are about players who came, not left. A year ago, in two episodes that felt revolutionary at the time but are now more like business as usual, quarterback Carson Beck and defensive back Xavier Lucas left their old schools for Miami.

Beck raised eyebrows because he was leaving perennial contender Georgia to play a fifth season at a school that hadn't sniffed a title in decades. The reported $4 million in NIL probably helped. Lucas became a litmus test of sorts when his old school, Wisconsin, sued Miami, alleging Cristobal's staff induced the freshman into breaching his NIL contract with the Badgers.

"I didn't pay attention to any of it," said Lucas, who grew up in nearby Pompano Beach. "I just wanted to come back and help the fellas win."

If this matchup from out of nowhere proves anything, it might be that in a new, more-expensive era of college football, anyone can win.

"Indiana is showing that if you have no history or tradition, you can still catch up to the Alabamas and Ohio States of the world," said Chris Fowler, who will call the game for ESPN and agreed it is the most unexpected title-game matchup he's been a part of. "Cignetti just showed you how."

As did Cristobal at Miami.

"There are no excuses anymore," Fowler said.



Chris Carlson | AP photo

Miami head coach Mario Cristobal and Indiana head coach Curt Cignetti pose with the trophy after Sunday's news conference previewing Monday's national championship game.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF BRACKET

FIRST ROUND	QUARTERFINALS	SEMIFINALS	NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
DEC. 19-20	DEC. 31-JAN. 1	JAN. 8-9	JANUARY 19

9 Alabama
8 Oklahoma
ROSE
9 Alabama
1 Indiana
1 Indiana
12 J. Madison
5 Oregon
ORANGE
5 Oregon
4 Texas Tech
PEACH
5 Oregon
10 Miami
7 Texas A&M
COTTON
10 Miami
2 Ohio State
10 Miami
11 Tulane
6 Ole Miss
SUGAR
6 Ole Miss
3 Georgia
FIESTA
6 Ole Miss

2026 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
JANUARY 19 · MIAMI
1 Indiana
HARD ROCK STADIUM
MIAMI GARDENS, FLA.
10 Miami

Ticket prices remain hot at home of the Hurricanes

By Tim Reynolds
AP Sports Writer

MIAMI — Ticket prices for Monday night's College Football Playoff national championship game between Indiana and Miami have dropped only slightly from their peaks, with supply obviously low and demand obviously high.

Ticketdata, which tracks resale pricing of tickets across major marketplaces, said the lowest get-in price for the game at Hard Rock Stadium was $3,652 at midday Sunday. That number — based on a two-ticket purchase, including fees — was down about 8% from where it was at midday Saturday.

Many sites still showed some tickets topping $10,000 apiece in the best sections of the lower bowl of the stadium, and some parking passes — no game ticket included — were topping $1,000 online, though a few could be found in remote lots for as little as $100 or so.

Earlier in the week, CFP executive director Rich Clark was asked about how ticket prices at Hard Rock Stadium for the game were topping the secondary-market costs for Taylor Swift shows at the same stadium during her recent world tour.

"It's more expensive than Taylor Swift? We have arrived," Clark said, smiling — and it should be noted that the CFP has nothing to do with setting the secondary market costs. "That's awesome. I will just say that speaks to the excitement of the game."

Miami went through its allotment with ease, as would be expected — Hard Rock is its home stadium. Season ticket partners for the Hurricanes were all sent emails in recent weeks asking them to stake their claims for tickets to each round of the CFP, and those who responded to those pitches had the best luck in getting their hands on the hottest ticket in college football.

Indiana fans have traveled in droves to the Hoosiers' CFP games at the Rose Bowl and Peach Bowl, and it's clear that the Hoosiers have come to Miami as well.

"I know they'll travel well to this game," Indiana linebacker Isaiah Jones said. "I think it's going to be a statement that it's in Miami, and I think we'll still see a very decent amount of Indiana Hoosiers fans."

Hoosiers quarterback Fernando Mendoza, a Miami native, can attest to that.

"Tickets are definitely a problem," the Heisman Trophy winner said, "because there's so many family members that want to come to the game."

NO LUCAS UNTIL 2ND HALF

Miami will be without defensive back Xavier Lucas for the first half of Monday's College Football Playoff national championship game against Indiana because he was flagged for targeting in the second half of the Fiesta Bowl semifinal earlier this month.

The Hurricanes tried, to no avail, to get the play revisited.

So, on Sunday in the final news conference for both teams before the title matchup, Miami coach Mario Cristobal said he hopes the rule gets amended going forward.

"We feel it was unjustly administered, and now it impacts the last game of the season," Cristobal said. "We do have the ability, again, as an officiating crew and the powers that be to revisit that to give every team due process and their best ability to compete in this game."

Lucas was ejected in the fourth quarter of the Fiesta Bowl win over Mississippi. Miami was upset that a targeting call earlier in the game against Ole Miss was overturned after review, saying it felt the plays were extremely similar.

Players flagged for targeting in the first half of a game have to simply sit out the remainder of that contest.

Those flagged in the second half are out for the remainder of that game and must sit the first half of the ensuing game as well.

NATIONAL TV TAKING NOTICE

The Miami-Indiana game made it to NBC's "Saturday Night Live" and CBS' "Sunday Morning" this weekend.

SNL took a comedic look at Miami alum Michael Irvin's impassioned antics on the Hurricanes sideline, with Kam Patterson portraying Irvin for a segment on "Weekend Update." The bit showed a photo of Irvin screaming toward Miami coach Mario Cristobal; Patterson, as Irvin, said, "Here's me whispering."

Fortunately for Cristobal, the bit didn't include Irvin's now-infamous smooch of the Miami coach's cheek after one of the CFP wins.

"I'd rather not get kissed by Michael Irvin. ... That whole kiss thing, I'm never going to live that down," Cristobal said, adding that he considers Irvin a brother and has been thrilled to have him on the sideline.

On "Sunday Morning," host Jane Pauley — a proud Indiana alum — discussed the school's rise from perennial football doormat status to becoming a juggernaut, even drawing parallels to the movie "Hoosiers" and that championship tale. She lauded an "unexcitable" coach in Curt Cignetti, along with "disciplined training and a lot of money to back it up" as part of the reasons why Indiana got to the title game.

And, of course, she pointed out Heisman Trophy winner Fernando Mendoza — a Miami native — and his rise to Indiana royalty.

"A Florida boy," Pauley said. "A Hoosier now."

Miami star Bain prepares for emotional final game

By Tim Reynolds
AP Sports Writer



Julio Cortez | AP file photo

Miami defensive lineman Rueben Bain Jr. was a key early recruit for coach Mario Cristobal who was named ACC Defensive Player of the Year last month.

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Rueben Bain Jr. is about to cry.

Time will tell if the standout Miami defensive lineman — who is widely expected to forgo his senior season and enter this year's NFL draft, where he'll likely be among the first picks — will be shedding those tears in a sad way or a celebratory way, whether he'll be doing so inconsolably after a loss or with orange-and-green confetti from a championship celebration stuck to his face.

Bain and the Hurricanes will play for the College Football Playoff national title on Monday night, when Miami (13-2, No. 10 CFP) will take on Indiana (15-0, No. 1 CFP) to decide a champion. The game will be played on Miami's home field at Hard Rock Stadium, 10 miles north of where Bain went to high school.

"I was actually sitting on the bench at practice with my dad like two days ago and I told him I'm going to cry. No matter the outcome of the game, I'm going to cry," Bain said. "It's really my last game. It's been a long but quick three years, spending all my time here at Miami. It's like a fairytale story for me because I get to start it at Hard Rock and end it at Hard Rock. I'm going to cry. I know I'm going to cry."

Bain hasn't had much to cry about this season. He and defensive lineman Akheem Mesidor are perhaps the best 1-2 punch at that position in college football, causing problems for every offensive line they have faced all season long. They spent tons of time working together with Miami defensive line coach Jason Taylor — a Pro Football Hall of Famer — before and after practices, and people gather just to watch how hard they go at each other in pregame warmups.

"Those two guys do whatever it takes," Taylor said this season.

Bain could have played anywhere. He stayed home, easily one of the biggest recruiting gets for Miami in years.

He committed to the Hurricanes at a time when Miami was going 5-7 in Mario Cristobal's first year as coach. Bain had a stellar freshman year in 2023, but the Hurricanes went only 7-6 that season.

A year ago, Miami won 10 games and was in the running for a CFP spot even after Bain got hurt on the second play of the season. He missed four games (five, really, when adding in how he missed the majority of the opener at Florida, where he was injured); he was very good again, though still never really seemed to hit his best stride. This year, he was better than ever — an Associated Press All-American and the ACC defensive player of the year.

Not coincidentally, Miami is better than it has been in about a quarter-century.

"Seems like every true competitor takes those setbacks and turns it into something positive that launches them and elevates their game and their spirit and their ability to be a great teammate, and I think this is a perfect case and an example of that," Cristobal said Sunday. "Rueben Bain was born and raised down here in South Florida and was always a huge part of the community, and it was his dream to play for the Miami Hurricanes, and him watching on the sideline just stoked a fire in him where he just refused to be denied going forward."



Marta Lavandier | AP photo

Miami defensive lineman Rueben Bain Jr. speaks during media day ahead of Monday's national championship game.

Watching teammates play may have stoked that fire. Haters also have helped.

Bain makes no secret of the fact that he reads what's out there. Negative stories, negative comments, negative things on social, he takes notice and then takes it out on the next opponent that tries to get in his way. A perfect example: A Texas A&M offensive lineman was quoted last month as saying that he didn't think Bain would be someone the Aggies needed to worry about too much in their CFP first-round game. Bain had three sacks and a blocked field goal in a 10-3 Miami win.

He keeps on his phone clips that suggest doubt about his game and even has a notebook for further reminders, like the draft chatter in recent weeks suggesting he's too light and his arms are too short for him to excel in the NFL.

"My notebook is filled up now. I ain't got no more space to write," Bain said. "I don't really pay attention to all the outside noise because right now just the love I get from being in Miami and the city of people I grew up with, how they've got immense pride in this program and university and me, that's all I need. I don't need no outside noise. Just the love from people from Miami."

Bain is going to have that love from Miami forever.

As an All-American, his name will be added to the rafters of the Hurricanes' practice facility. He'll always be known as one of the guys who decided to stay home to help the Hurricanes get back into the national title picture. His place in Miami history is secure.

On Monday, he'll get to see how the story ends and why those tears will be streaming.

"He's become a great leader," Cristobal said. "And now he's, I would say, confident enough to be outspoken as a leader as well."

Playoff expansion debated ahead of ESPN's Friday deadline

By Eddie Pells
AP National Writer



Gareth Patterson | AP file photo

The College Football Playoff is likely to expand at some point, but the two biggest conferences are in disagreement as the SEC would like to cap the field at 16 teams while the Big Ten would like to ultimately go up to 24.

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. — College football leaders gave every indication Sunday that they remain stuck in a yearlong debate about expanding the playoff from 12 teams to 16 or beyond. Commissioners and school presidents met on the eve of the College Football Playoff title game, facing a Friday deadline from ESPN — the $7.8 billion bankroller of the postseason — to decide on changing or staying at the current 12-team model.

The debate boils down to two conferences, the Big Ten and SEC, that both want to expand but have widely different visions of how far expansion should go.

"I think that's up to two people," American Conference Commissioner Tim Pernetti said.

He was speaking of Tony Petitti of the Big Ten and Greg Sankey of the SEC, who did not reach any agreement during the last scheduled meeting before Friday's deadline.

"Still more work to do," Pettiti said as he quickly made his way toward an escalator at the Miami Beach hotel where the meeting was held. "One-hundred percent, we're still working."

The Miami-Indiana final Monday night will mark the end of the current contract, and a six-year deal worth $1.3 billion a year kicks in next season. Its revenue-distribution model doles out more to the SEC and Big Ten than the Atlantic Coast and Big 12, among the power conferences. Just as importantly, it leaves the two biggest leagues squarely in charge of what comes next.

The SEC is pushing for an expansion to 16 teams, with an emphasis on at-large bids — a format favored by the other Power Four leagues and most of the smaller conferences that are hoping for access into whatever comes next.

The Big Ten has pushed for a bracket of up to 24 teams with multiple automatic qualifiers from each conference. It could do away with the need for conference title games and replace them with seeding games to determine, say, two or three of the automatic spots.

"It's a system that would keep a lot of teams in it, put some more value into the regular season," Indiana athletic director Scott Dolson said in an interview Saturday. "This is really about quality people coming together" to make a decision.

If the commissioners can't agree on a new number, the tournament would automatically stay at 12, with a deadline of Dec. 1, 2026, to make changes for the following season.

The only real news coming out of the weekend was a social media post from President Donald Trump saying he would sign an executive order to give an exclusive four-hour window to the Army-Navy game, which takes place the second Saturday in December — a date currently wedged between conference title games and the start of the playoff.

A move to 16 or more games could put the playoff in conflict with the annual meeting between service acadamies.

"This national event stands above Commercial Postseason Games," said Trump, who will attend Monday night's final.

Mississippi State president Mark Keenum, the chair of the CFP board of managers, tried to strike a tone of calm, not commiting to the idea that any chance for compromise is dead.

"This was not a deadline day of any kind, so they're still talking, and we anticipate the discussions will continue," Keenum said.

Berry scores 33 to rally Louisville past NC State in OT

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Imari Berry scored 33 points and No. 9 Louisville rallied from a 13-point second-half deficit to beat North Carolina State 88-80 in overtime Sunday for its 11th consecutive victory.

Skylar Jones' 17 points helped carry the Cardinals (18-3, 8-0 ACC), who went from trailing by 13 to leading 54-51 in a span of less than 4½ minutes bridging the third and fourth quarters.

Mackenly Randoph scored four of her 12 points in overtime. Berry, who had a game-high 12 rebounds, made two free throws with 10.5 seconds left for the final points of regulation.

Khamil Pierre scored five of her season-high 26 points in the final two minutes of regulation, but N.C. State (13-6, 6-2) couldn't overcome mishaps down the stretch. Zamareya Jones added 20 points, including a key 3-pointer in the fourth quarter after returning to action wearing protective mask, and Zoe Brooks had 17 points for the Wolfpack (14-5, 7-1).

Louisville followed Thursday's victory at No. 23 Notre Dame by ending a six-game losing skid in the series with N.C. State.

A 14-2 spurt in the third quarter stretched the Wolfpack's edge to 47-34. Berry scored the last eight points of the third in a 53-second span as the Cardinals pulled within 50-47. Louisville went ahead with the first five points of the fourth.

Skylar Jones scored the first five points of a 7-0 spurt that lifted Louisville to a 64-58 lead before the Wolfpack rallied.



Jayne Kamin-Oncea | AP photo

UCLA center Lauren Betts (51) celebrates on the bench after a 3-pointer by her sister, Sienna Betts, during the second half of Sunday's top-15 showdown.

No. 2 SOUTH CAROLINA 90, COPPIN STATE 48

BALTIMORE — Joyce Edwards had 26 points and five steals, and South Carolina beat Coppin State.

The Gamecocks (19-1) made the trip to Baltimore after the Eagles (4-16) played at South Carolina last season. As expected, there was a good crowd at 4,100-seat PEC Arena, although many of the them were wearing garnet in support of the Gamecocks.

Coppin State was down just 22-14 after one quarter, but South Carolina outscored the Eagles 22-5 in the second and it was never close after that.

Tessa Johnson scored 17 points for the Gamecocks, shooting 5 of 8 from 3-point range. Ta'Niya Latson had 15 points, five assists and six steals.

Khila Morris led Coppin State with 20 points.

South Carolina improved to 28-0 against HBCU teams under coach Dawn Staley. It was the fourth time in that span the Gamecocks faced one on the road.

Coppin State has welcomed its share of big-name teams into its arena in recent years, including Maryland in 2021. LSU came in 2023 in what was basically a homecoming for Angel Reese.

No. 3 UCLA 97, No. 12 MARYLAND 67

LOS ANGELES — Gabriela Jaquez scored 22 points, and UCLA pulled away in a dominant third quarter to beat Maryland.

The Bruins (17-1, 7-0 Big Ten) won their 11th in a row since their only loss to then-No. 4 Texas on Nov. 26. During that stretch, they've won by a whopping 33.7-point margin, with their only close game being a seven-point win at then-No. 19 Ohio State.

Oluchi Okananwa led the Terrapins with 25 points and Saylor Poffenbarger added 15. Maryland (17-3, 5-3) split its trip to Los Angeles, winning by seven points at USC on Thursday.

The Bruins stretched a 12-point halftime lead into a 73-47 advantage in the third, outscoring the Terps 26-10. After making five 3-pointers in the second quarter, the Bruins had two in the third. They used scoring runs of 10-4 and 14-4 while limiting the Terps to just three field goals.

UCLA had its third-best 3-point shooting performance of the season, making 13 of 23 for 56%. Charlisse Leger-Walker and Gianna Kneepkens had four each.

Leger-Walker had 17 points and nine rebounds and Kneepkens added 16 points despite four fouls. Lauren Betts finished with 11 points and five rebounds after resting in the fourth. She jumped off the bench and raised her arms when younger sister Sienna hit a 3-pointer.

No. 4 TEXAS 80, TEXAS A&M 35

AUSTIN, Texas — Kyla Oldacre had a career-best 18 rebounds along with five blocks and 10 points and Texas routed Texas A&M to end a a two-game losing streak.

Texas (19-2, 4-2 SEC) pulled away for its 37th straight home winby outscoring A&M 23-3 in the third quarter. The Aggies (8-6, 1-4) made their only basket from the field with 10 seconds remaining after missing their first 13 shots of the quarter and committing seven turnovers. Rori Harmon scored 10 points in the quarter.

Freshman Aaliyah Crump, returning after missing 15 games with a foot injury, led the Longhorns with 12 points to go with six rebounds and four assists in 21 minutes as a sub. Crump, one of the top-rated recruits in the country, averaged 13.2 points in five games as a starter before the injury.

Madison Booker had 10 points, six assists and four of the Longhorns' 14 steals. Harmon made two steals and needs seven to break the Longhorns' career record set by Linda Waggoner in 1980. Harmon, a senior, already set the career assists mark at Texas this season.

No. 6 LSU 91, No. 13 OKLAHOMA 72

NORMAN, Okla. — Flau'jae Johnson had 23 points and 10 rebounds, and LSU rolled past Oklahoma.

Jada Richard added 21 points for the Tigers (17-2, 3-2 SEC), who knocked off the Sooners after beating then-No. 2 Texas last Sunday.

Aaliyah Chavez, Oklahoma's star freshman, was held to 11 points on 3-for-14 shooting. She entered the day averaging 19.2 points.

Payton Verhulst scored 21 points and Raegan Beers added 10 points and 11 rebounds for the Sooners (14-4, 2-3).

LSU, the nation's leader with just over 100 points per game, got the best of an Oklahoma squad that ranked second with nearly 91 points per contest. LSU outscored Oklahoma 29-8 at the free throw line and two Sooners fouled out.

Oklahoma sold out the Lloyd Noble Center, but home fans started filing out midway through the fourth quarter as the Sooners lost their third straight. They had climbed to No. 5 in the AP Top 25, but now have consecutive losses to ranked opponents Ole Miss, Kentucky and LSU.

MISSISSIPPI STATE 71, No. 7 KENTUCKY 59

STARKVILLE, Miss. — Kharyssa Richardson scored a career-high 23 points, Favour Nwaedozi had 21 rebounds and Mississippi State took advantage of Kentucky's shooting woes to beat the Wildcats.

Kentucky shot 32% from the field, making only 5 of 29 3-point tries.

Down 33-30 at the half, the Bulldogs (15-5, 2-4 SEC) outscored the Wildcats (17-3, 4-2) 18-11 in the third quarter and pulled away tio snap a four-game losing streak. Mississippi State had a 15-2 run, highlighted by two 3-pointers from Traynna Crisp and a five-point spurt from Richardson.

Nwaedozi led Mississippi State to a 52-35 rebounding edge and had 10 points on 5-of-10 shooting. Richardson had seven rebounds. Crisp had 16 points on 4-of-5 shooting from 3-point range.

Tonie Morgan led Kentucky with 15 points and seven assists.

No. 11 IOWA 75, No. 15 MICHIGAN STATE 68

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Hannah Stuelke had 22 points, Ava Heiden scored 20 and Iowa beat Michigan State, snapping the Spartans' nine-game winning streak while extending the Hawkeyes' to six in a row.

Stuelke made 10 of 14 shots and 2 of 4 free throws for the Hawkeyes (16-2, 7-0 Big Ten). She added nine rebounds, five assists, three steals and a block. Heiden hit 8 of 13 shots and 4 of 5 free throws, adding six rebounds, two steals and two blocks. Chazadi Wright had 11 points and five assists.

Grace VanSlooten had 17 points and seven rebounds to pace the Spartans (17-2, 6-2). Jalyn Brown scored 16 and Juliann Woodard added 14 points off the bench.

Stuelke made a layup and two free throws in the final 51 seconds and Chazadi Wright hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer as Iowa took a 22-16 lead in a first quarter that saw nine lead changes and two ties.

Addison Deal came off the bench to hit two 3-pointers, scoring all eight of her points in the second quarter to help the Hawkeyes take a 41-29 lead at halftime.

Another Wright 3-pointer gave Iowa its largest lead — 53-36 with 5:53 left in the third quarter. Michigan State chipped away and used Jalyn Brown's layup in the final minute to cut it to 65-56 heading to the fourth.

Brown hit a jumper to get the Spartans within 71-66 with 3:28 left but they would get no closer.

Iowa shot 53.6% overall while holding Michigan State to 44.6%.

GEORGIA 82, No. 16 MISSISSIPPI 59

ATHENS, Ga. — Dani Carnegie had a career-high 32 points and 11 rebounds, Trinity Turner added 13 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, and Georgia beat No. 16 Mississippi 82-59 on Sunday.

Georgia (16-3, 2-3 SEC) earned its first Quad 1 win of the season. The Lady Bulldogs snapped a 11-game home skid against teams in the AP Top 25 and beat a ranked opponent by 20-plus points for the first time since 2006.

Carnegie, a Georgia Tech transfer, made 11 of 17 from the field, 5 of 8 from 3-point range, and 5 of 7 from the free-throw line.

Christeen Iwuala led Ole Miss (16-4, 3-2) with 13 points and 10 rebounds and Sira Thienou scored 12. Cotie McMahon — who went into the game averaging a team-high 19.2 points on 49.6% shooting — finished with nine points on 1-of-13 shooting to go with 11 rebounds and five assists.

Rylie Theuerkauf made two free throws that gave Georgia the lead for good less than 2 1/2 minutes into the game and sparked a 16-2 run that made it 19-6 with 1:04 left in the first quarter. Debreasha Powe capped a 7-0 spurt with a 3-pointer that trimmed the deficit to nine points with 7:12 remaining in the first half, but Carnegie answered with a layup and the Lady Bulldogs led by double figures for the final 26-plus minutes.

OKLAHOMA STATE 86, No. 19 IOWA STATE 58

STILLWATER, Okla. — Stailee Heard had 18 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists and Oklahoma State routed Iowa State, sending the reeling Cyclones to their fifth consecutive loss.

It was Heard's first career triple-double and the third in Oklahoma State history. She is averaging 20.8 points over the past four games.

Before Sunday, Iowa State's losing streak included only one loss by double digits. Oklahoma State's 13-0 run in the middle of the second quarter put the Cyclones down by 16 points and they never recovered.

Oklahoma State went on to score 30 points in the second period and led 43-21 at halftime. Micah Gray hit three 3-pointers and scored 12 points in the quarter and the Cowgirls shot 61%.

In the third quarter, the Cyclones cut into their 22-point halftime deficit and had it down to 51-35 before Haleigh Timmer scored 10 points in a 15-0 run that made it 66-35 after the third quarter.

Entering the fourth, Audi Crooks and Jada Williams were the only players with more than three points for Iowa State (14-5, 2-5 Big 12). Crooks, the nation's leading scorer at 27.6 points per game, finished with 15 points and seven rebounds. Williams had 15 points and seven assists. Iowa State, second in the nation with 21.9 assists per game, had 11 on Sunday.

No. 20 TENNESSEE 70, No. 21 ALABAMA 59

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Talaysia Cooper scored 16 points, Janiah Barker had a double-double, and Tennessee defeated Alabama for the Lady Vols' sixth straight win.

Barker scored 10 points and grabbed 11 rebounds in her third double-double of the season. Mia Pauldo added 13 points, Zee Spearman 12 and Alyssa Latham another 12 off the bench for Tennessee (13-3, 5-0 SEC), which has won eight of nine overall.

Tennessee fell behind early in the fourth quarter when Jessica Timmons' 3-pointer gave Alabama a 54-53 lead, capping a 13-2 run in which she scored eight points. Trailing for the first time since it was 19-18, Tennessee bounced back with two free throws and a 3-pointer by Pauldo to lead 58-54 and the Lady Vols outscored Alabama 17-4 heading into the final minute.

Timmons scored 22 points and Karly Weathers added 11 for Alabama (17-3, 3-3). Naomi Jones had 11 rebounds and blocked six shots

No. 25 ILLINOIS 74, NORTHWESTERN 71

CHAMPAGNE, Ill. — Berry Wallace scored a career-high 29 points, 12 in the fourth quarter, and Illinois held off a fourth-quarter rally to defeat Northwestern.

Illinois took the lead for good with 2 1/2 minutes left in the second quarter and led 58-51 heading to the fourth. Although Illinois remained in front, Northwestern cut it to one on a 3-pointer by Xamiya Walton with seven minutes to go and again on a layup by Casey Harter with 2:15 remaining.

At that point, Wallace scored in the paint for a 73-70 lead, then Tayla Thomas hit one free throw to get Northwestern within 73-71. Both teams came up empty on their next two possessions before Cearah Parchment made a free throw for a 74-71 lead with nine seconds left. Northwestern's Caroline Lau missed a potential tying 3-pointer with one second left.

Parchment had 10 points and 11 rebounds for the fourth double-double of her freshman season. Aaliyah Guyton had 13 points for the Illini (15-4, 5-3 Big Ten).

Grace Sullivan scored 21 points, Walton 19, Harter 13 and Lau 12 for Northwestern (8-11, 2-6). The rest of the Wildcats managed six points — all by Thomas.

MEN'S TOP 25

No. 7 HOUSTON 103, ARIZONA STATE 73

HOUSTON — Kingston Flemings had 20 points and eight assists, Chris Cenac Jr. added a career high-tying 18 points and Houston extended its winning streak to 11 games with a victory over Arizona State.

Cenac, who also had eight rebounds and five assists, had 12 points and led six Houston players with at least eight points in the first half as the Cougars (17-1, 5-0 Big 12) built a 56-29 lead at the break. Houston shot 55% and was 8 of 16 from 3-point distance in the first half.

Emanuel Sharp and Milos Uzan each had 16 points and Joseph Tugler finished with 12 points and seven rebounds for Houston, which shot 56% and was 12 for 25 from long distance. The Cougars, who posted their highest point total of the season, have won 15 straight games at home.

Houston forced 17 turnovers and converted them into 31 points, and held a 44-22 advantage in points in the paint.

Andrija Grbovic scored 14 points, Anthony Johnson added 12 and Bryce Ford and Noah Meeusen scored 10 apiece for Arizona State (10-8, 1-4). The Sun Devils shot 41% and were 9 of 25 on 3-pointers. Arizona State was 20 of 24 from the free throw line, but lost for the sixth time in seven games.

Houston jumped out to a 30-5 lead on a layup by Flemings with about 11½ minutes remaining in the first half.

Durant moves past Nowitzki into 6th on scoring list

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Kevin Durant knew Sunday exactly how close he was to surpassing his idol, Dirk Nowitzki, on the NBA's career scoring list.

Durant needed the 17 points to move past Nowitzki into sixth place on the all-time scorer list. Durant got those points and finished with 18 in a 119-110 win over New Orleans. The 15-time All-Star scored his final two points from the free throw line with 15.2 seconds remaining and added another career highlight.

Durant has 31,562 points, two better than Nowitzki (31,560), with Michael Jordan in fifth place at 32,292.

"To be up there with Dirk, somebody I looked up to, I idolized, I competed against," Durant said. "We had some great battles. He always was supportive of my career and my game. So, you know to be up there with a legend like that, it's just insane. And be right under Michael Jordan, it's crazy man.

"I want to continue to keep stacking, keep climbing up the charts, just see how I finish. It's been amazing so far."

Jabari Smith Jr. scored a season-high 32 points, Alperen Sengun had 21 points and eight rebounds and Amen Thompson finished with 20 points as Houston won for the third time in four games.

Trey Murphy III scored 21 points on 7-for-15 shooting and Zion Williamson had 20 points and six rebounds. Derik Queen finished with 15 points for the Pelicans, who lost for the fourth time in five games and 13th time in 15 games.

Smith, who had 22 points in the first half, bounced back from a 3-for-12 shooting performance in a win over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Friday. Against the Pelicans, he shot 11 for 21 and had a career-high seven 3-pointers.

Houston's Steven Adams had to be helped off the court in the fourth quarter with an apparent left ankle injury. Adams, who missed a few games earlier this season with a right ankle injury, had 10 rebounds and five points before leaving the game with just under 10 minutes left in the final quarter.



Ashley Landis | AP photo

Rockets forward Kevin Durant (7) presses a launch button after surpassing Dirk Nowitzki to become the NBA's sixth all-time leading scorer in Sunday's win over the Pelicans.

Durant's collection of milestones isn't lost of his teammates.

"He's passing people nightly," Smith said. "He's passing people in every category. He just keeps accomplishing milestones and he just acts like it's nothing. He doesn't celebrate it, he's wasn't out there trying to hunt and go get it. He's just out there hooping and it just happens organically.

"He's a testament of what a basketball player is supposed to be."

Durant reflected on the earlier years of his career when he and Nowitzki had "meaningful battles," including the Western Conference finals in 2011. Nowitzki and the Dallas Mavericks beat Durant and Oklahoma City 4-1 and went on to beat the Miami Heat for their first NBA championship.

Then, the next year, when the Mavericks tried to repeat, Durant and the Thunder swept them out of the playoffs.

"There were times going into a series I hated Dirk, you know what I'm saying. I'm sure it was vice versa," Durant said.

As Durant grew in the league, he idolized Nowitzki.

Durant wanted to the same respect Nowitzki received.

"I tried to emulate as much as I can all the great players, but I took a lot from Dirk," Durant said.

After the Rockets victory on Sunday night, a special message from Nowitzki was played on the video board.

"It's been incredible to watch his career," Nowitzki said in the video. "Like I said, he's one of the purest scorers this game has ever seen. And so congrats KD, keep it going. Move up a couple more spots and keep it up."

Durant appreciated the message from Nowitzki.

"For him to take time out of his day to send me a message on passing him on the charts is pretty cool," Durant said. "It speaks to how humble Dirk is."

BULLS 124, NETS 102

CHICAGO — Coby White scored 24 points, Ayo Dosunmu had 19 and Chicago beat Brooklyn to split a home-and-home set.

The Nets won the opener 112-109 on Friday night in Brooklyn.

Nikola Vucevic added 17 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for Chicago. Matas Buzelis also scored 17 points.

Nolan Traore scored 16 points for Brooklyn. Danny Wolf and Jalen Wilson each had 14. The Nets have lost nine of 11.

Dosunmu had 3-pointers at the beginning and end of a 10-0 run late in the first quarter to help the Bulls take a 39-22 lead into the second. Chicago led 70-51 at the half and the advantage stayed above 20 points for most of the second half.

The Bulls average more than 20,000 fans at the United Center, but there were plenty of empty seats at tip-off, which came 30 minutes after the Los Angeles Rams and Bears kicked off their NFC division round game a few miles away at Soldier Field. The Bears' first touchdown occurred just before an early timeout and got a loud roar from the crowd when a replay was shown on the video board.

GRIZZLIES 126, MAGIC 109

LONDON — Ja Morant had 24 points and 13 assists in his return to the lineup to lead Memphis to a victory over Orlando in the first regular-season game in London since 2019.

Jock Landale added 21 points and 8 rebounds and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 17 points as Memphis avenged its 118-111 loss to Orlando in Berlin on Thursday in the first of their European doubleheader.

Orlando trailed by 33 points in the first half before reducing the deficit to 17 on Paolo Banchero's 3-pointer to make it 108-91 with 8:15 left in the fourth quarter. The Grizzlies closed it out from there.

Anthony Black led the Magic with 19 points and Wendell Carter Jr. added 18 points and 7 rebounds. Banchero finished with 16 on 7 of 20 shooting. He also had 9 assists and 8 rebounds.

Morant had missed six games because of a right calf injury and provided an immediate spark for a Grizzlies team that had lost seven of nine. The two-time All Star started and had 20 points and 10 assists in the first half.

Grizzlies coach Tuomas Iisalo said in pregame comments that Morant would be on a minutes restriction. The star logged 28:24 minutes overall.

Magic forward Franz Wagner had 14 points in his second game back since missing five weeks with a high ankle sprain. Orlando was 10 of 33 from behind the arc.

The game at London's O2 Arena was the 10th regular-season game in the English capital. The first one was March 4, 2011.

Europe is set to host two more regular-season games in 2027. The host cities are Paris and Manchester, England. In 2028, Paris and Berlin will host games.

HORNETS 110, NUGGETS 87

DENVER — Brandon Miller scored 23 points, Tidjane Salaun came off the bench for 13 points and 11 rebounds, and Charlotte blew past injury-depleted Denver.

Rookie big man Ryan Kalkbrenner had 17 points and six rebounds, Collin Sexton had 14 points and five assists, and LaMelo Ball had 10 points, six assists and three steals for Charlotte.

Over the past three games, Miller has averaged 25.7 points per game.

The Hornets had lost four of their previous six games and entered the night 1-9 in its past 10 matchups against Denver, which suffered its second-most lopsided loss of the season.

The Nuggets were without five of their top eight scorers — center Nikola Jokic (bone bruise in left knee), forward Aaron Gordon (right hamstring strain), forward Cameron Johnson (bone bruise in right knee), guard Christian Braun (left ankle sprain) and center Jonas Valanciunas (right calf strain). The five players combine to average 77.3 points per game.

Without them, a Denver team that leads the NBA in points per game, field goal percentage and 3-point percentage was held to season lows in points (87) and 3-point percentage (21.1%).

Charlotte raced out to a 29-11 lead and was up 60-34 at halftime, led by 18 points from Miller, who made four of his six 3s in the first half. The Hornets led by as many as 33 points in the second half.

Jamal Murray scored a team-high 16 points for the Nuggets, snapping a career-best run of three consecutive games with at least 30 points.

Denver, which had won six of its previous seven games, fell to 7-5 since Jokic went down with an injury in a Dec. 29 loss at the Miami Heat.

DeBrincat scores in OT to lift Red Wings over Senators

The Associated Press

DETROIT — Alex DeBrincat scored 36 seconds into overtime to give the surging Detroit Red Wings a 4-3 win over the Ottawa Senators on Sunday.

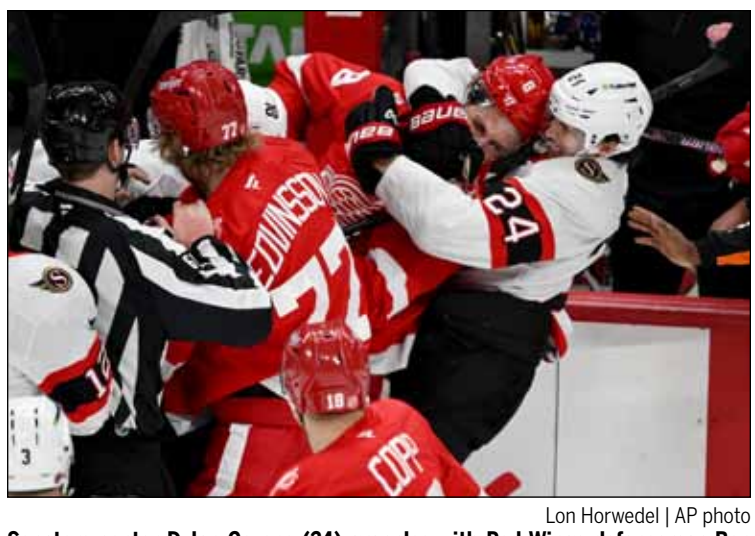
Axel Sandin-Pellikka, Lucas Raymond and James van Riemsdyk also scored for Detroit. Patrick Kane assisted on Sandin-Pellikka' goal, moving him two points shy of Mike Modano's record of 1,374 career points by a U.S.-born player.

John Gibson made 19 saves for his 15th victory in his last 17 games. The Red Wings improved to 9-4 in overtime games.

Drake Batherson had a goal and an assist for Ottawa. Dylan Cozens and Shane Pinto also scored, and James Reimer made 30 saves.

DeBrincat's team-high 26th goal was set up by Andrew Copp as Detroit kept pace with Tampa Bay atop the Atlantic Division standings. The Red Wings have won six of their last seven games.

The Senators took a 2-0 lead 5:05 into the game. Batherson scored on a rebound and Cozens converted in front off a feed from Brady Tkachuk during a power play.



Lon Horwedel | AP photo

Senators center Dylan Cozens (24) grapples with Red Wings defenseman Ben Chiarot (8) in front of the team benches on Sunday.

Sandin-Pellikka's power-play goal came on a shot from the point at 7:16 of the period to get the Red Wings on the scoreboard. Raymond's shot from the high slot over Reimer's glove at 6:06 of the second period tied it at 2-all.

Van Riemsdyk's power-play goal off a rebound with 3:07 left in the period involved some nifty stick work. He maneuvered the puck between his legs and shot it over Reimer's pad with the stick behind the back.

Pinto's tip-in during another power play in the final minute of the period tied it once again.

LIGHTNING 4, STARS 1

DALLAS — Brandon Hagel's tiebreaking goal midway through the second period proved to be the winner, and Andrei Vasilevskiy finished with 19 saves on 20 shots as Tampa Bay beat Dallas.

Rookie Dominic James and Jake Guentzel each had a goal and an assist, and Pontus Holmberg added a late empty-net score for the Lightning, who bounced back from a shootout loss at St. Louis on Friday that ended a franchise record-tying 11-game winning streak. Tampa Bay has a 13-game points streak and they are tied with Carolina atop of the Eastern Conference with 64 points, second overall to Colorado (74).

Hagel took a pass at the goal line to the left side of Dallas goaltender Jake Oettinger, playing off the line, and muscled the puck through the stick of Stars defenseman Esa Lindell for a 2-1 lead. It was Hagel's sixth winning goal this season, tied for second in the NHL behind Nashville's Steven Stamkos, who has seven.

Tampa Bay is a league-best 18-4-4 on the road and 20-1-0 when leading after two periods.

Vasilevskiy (20-7-3) has 10 straight 20-win seasons and is 17-4-3 in his career against Dallas.

Oskar Back scored for the struggling Stars, who came off a 2-3-1 road trip and have lost three straight in regulation, scoring one goal in each game. Oettinger, tied for eighth in the NHL with 17 wins, stopped 22 shots and is 1-4-2 in his last seven starts.

Dallas, tied with Minnesota for second overall in the West with 63 points, lost for the fifth time in regulation in 25 games when scoring first.

Back opened the scoring four minutes in and four minutes later James evened the score. Two of James' four goals this season have been scored in the last seven games.

OILERS 5, BLUES 0

EDMONTON, Alberta — Zach Hyman had two goals and an assist, Connor Ingram made 27 saves for his first shutout of the season and Edmonton beat St. Louis.

Vasily Podkolzin had a goal and an assist and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Andrew Mangiapane also scored for the Oilers, who have gone 5-1-2 in their last eight games.

Nugent-Hopkins played in his 1,000th regular-season contest, becoming just the 63rd player in history to record a goal in his milestone match. Connor McDavid and Mattias Ekholm each had a pair of assists.

Edmonton is now 21-1-4 when scoring first this season.

Jordan Binnington had 23 saves for St. Louis, who snapped a two-game win streak. Blues forward Dylan Holloway returned after missing the last 15 games with an ankle injury.

Hyman has 17 goals in his last 20 games, the most by any player in the league since Dec. 11.

Top seeds advance on opening day of Australian Open

By John Pye
AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia — Aryna Sabalenka and Carlos Alcaraz fulfilled expectations on opening night of the Australian Open, the No. 1 seeds advancing in straight sets in a Sunday session that started with tennis royalty Rod Laver and Roger Federer in the crowd.

Rod Laver Arena was heaving for their first-round matches, capping a day when a record total of 100,763 fans packed into Melbourne Park.

The 45-year-old Venus Williams set a record, too, becoming the oldest player ever in the women's singles draw at the Australian Open.

Out on John Cain Arena, the so-called People's Court because it's open to fans with ground passes, Williams was up two service breaks at 4-0 in the third set before Olga Danilovic rallied to win six straight games in a 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-4 victory.

The seven-time major winner, playing on a wild-card entry in the singles in just her second major since returning to the tour last year, plans to continue in doubles.

"I'm really proud of my effort today because I'm playing better with each match, getting to the places that I want to get to," she said. "Right now I'm just going to have to keep going forward and working on myself."

Sabalenka fended off left-handed wild-card entry Tiantsoa Rakotomanga Rajaonah, 6-4, 6-1 after dropping the opening service game.

"I didn't start my best. She showed up. Fired on. She was playing great," said Sabalenka, who won the Australian title in 2023 and '24 and was runner-up last year. "It was a tricky start."

Sabalenka prepared for the first major of the season with a title in Brisbane but was a little more nervous than usual because Laver, the Australian great, and 20-time major winner Federer were watching.

"I'm a huge fan. I wanted to show great tennis so you guys enjoyed watching me play," she said. "There was definitely a lot of pressure. I was walking, thinking 'don't look there, don't look there!'"

Her next round is against Chinese qualifier Bai Zhuoxuan, who outlasted 2021 French Open runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (10) in a 2-hour, 43-minute match. No. 28 Emma Raducanu, who could potentially meet Sabalenka in the third round, beat Mananchaya Sawangkaew 6-4, 6-1.

Day 1 of a scheduled 15 closed with Alcaraz winning 6-3, 7-6 (2), 6-2 over Adam Walton, beginning his bid to set a record for being the youngest player to complete a career Grand Slam.



Dita Alangkara | AP photo

No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka reacts during her first round match against Tiantsoa Rakotomanga Rajaonah at the Australian Open on Sunday. Sabalenka, last year's runner-up, won 6-4, 6-1.



Dita Alangkara | AP photo

Carlos Alcaraz won a hard-fought second set against Adam Walton en route to an opening win on Sunday in Melbourne.

ZVEREV ADVANCES

Alexander Zverev, runner-up here last year to Jannik Sinner, shrugged off a sluggish start to beat Gabriel Diallo 6-7 (7), 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 to reach the second round at Melbourne Park for the 10th straight year.

"Definitely, when I saw the draw, wasn't too happy to be honest," Zverev said of the tricky challenge presented by No. 41-ranked Diallo. "He's very young, very talented. Unbelievably aggressive."

No. 10 Alexander Bublik advanced over Jenson Brooks by 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, No. 29 Frances Tiafoe overpowered Jason Kubler 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-2 and Michael Zheng fended off Sebastian Korda 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (0), 6-3 in an all-American first-rounder.

Zheng, a college star at Columbia who advanced through qualifying to make his tour-level debut, will next face No. 32 Corentin Moutet, who was booed after his underarm serve on match point in a 6-4, 7-6 (1), 6-3 win over Tristan Schoolkate.

UPSETS AND BALLKIDS

Two of the women's seeds went out in the opening afternoon, with Elsa Jacquemot ousting No. 20 Marta Kostyuk 6-7 (4), 7-6 (4), 7-6 (7) and Turkish qualifier Zeynep Sönmez upsetting No. 11 Ekaterina Alexandrova 7-5, 4-6, 6-4.

Sönmez halted her match briefly in the second set to help a ballkid who appeared to be struggling in the heat before the tournament medical team took over.

Seventh-seeded Jasmine Paolini, No. 12 Elina Svitolina and Maria Sakkari all advanced in straight sets.

Former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova withdrew because of a shoulder injury before her scheduled first-round match, giving a place in the main draw to Taylor Townsend, the lucky loser from qualifying, to take on Hailey Baptiste.

In a two-and-a-half-hour all-American contest on Court 13, Baptiste prevailed 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-3.

MONDAY MATCHES

Coco Gauff will open play Monday on Rod Laver Arena against Kamilla Rakhimova. Iga Swiatek and Novak Djokovic have night matches.

At 45, Venus Williams sets record but falls in 1st round

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — It took 45 years to be in a position to set a record that has drawn so much attention. So another 14 1/2 minutes serving to keep her Australian Open hopes alive felt like no time at all for Venus Williams.

Ranked No. 576 and playing on a wild-card entry, the seven-time major winner led 4-0 in the third set Sunday before Olga Danilovic rallied to win six straight games — getting the vital break in the extra-long, next-to-last game — for a 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-4 victory.

"It was an amazing journey on the court today," said Williams, who left the stadium with a smile and a wave.

Just by starting the first-round match, Williams became the oldest woman to compete in an Australian Open singles main draw, surpassing the mark set by Japan's Kimiko Date, who was 44 when she lost in the first round in 2015.

"I'm really proud of my effort today because I'm playing better with each match, getting to the places that I want to get to," Williams said. "Right now, I'm just going to have to keep going forward and working on myself and working to control my errors.

"Those are things, too, that come with playing extra matches ... all of those things that I'm still learning. It's kind of weird, but it's super exciting to have played that well and to get myself in that position and come very close."

She was 17 when she first made her Australian Open debut in 1998, reaching the quarterfinals. This was her 22nd trip to Melbourne Park, where she lost finals to her sister, Serena, in 2003 and 2017.

Williams was married in December to Andrea Preti and the couple traveled together in Melbourne. Williams was determined not just to break Date's age record. She wanted to punctuate the occasion with a win that may just set up another match against Coco Gauff.

After splitting the first two sets, Williams went on a roll and dropped just five points across four games, hitting some vintage winners. Then No. 68-ranked Danilovic found range with her big left-handed forehand returns and put Williams back under pressure.

"I told myself before the match I really want to take this moment — playing against Venus Williams is something I can't take for granted," Danilovic said. "At 4-0, I said 'just play.'

"It was such a pleasure playing against such a legend."

At 4-4 in the deciding set, Williams served for 14 minutes and 28 seconds, saving two break points and setting up game points of her own with powerful winners and clutch aces, before she finally succumbed.

"It was such a great game, such a great moment. The energy from the crowd was amazing. That lifted me up so much," Williams said of that penultimate game on her serve. "She played a great game. Also, some luck there, as well. That's just the sport. That's how it works sometimes. But it was an amazing moment."

Danilovic calmly served out, clinching it in 2 hours, 17 minutes when a Williams forehand clipped the net and landed just wide of the line on match point.

Williams entered the Australian Open on a five-match losing streak since the first and only win in her comeback to the tour at Washington last year. Her U.S. Open comeback last August also ended in the first round.

"Yeah, at 4-love I felt good. Also, it's the biggest lead I've had since I've been back," Williams said. "In a lot of ways I'm having to relearn how to do things again, if that makes any sense."

She'll keep that process going in the doubles at Melbourne Park, then she'll think about her schedule for the rest of 2026.

"Right now I'm very much in the tournament," she said. "My next focus is the doubles. So that's where my head is."



Aaron Favila | AP photo

Venus Williams became the oldest woman to play in singles at the Australian Open on Sunday. She was on the wrong side of a comeback win by Olga Danilovic.

KOSTYUK INJURED

Marta Kostyuk tore a ligament in her left ankle during her first-round loss.

Elsa Jacquemot ousted the No. 20 Kostyuk 6-7 (4), 7-6 (4), 7-6 (7) after saving a match point.

Kostyuk rolled her ankle toward the end of the third set.

"Unfortunately, I injured my ankle during my match today, and after further tests, torn ligament was confirmed," Kostyuk wrote Sunday on Instagram.

The Ukrainian added she won't be able to play in doubles at the tournament with her partner Elena-Gabriela Ruse.

"The Australian Open has always been one of my favorite tournaments, so this isn't how I imagined my run ending," she said. "But that's part of the sport."

Kostyuk had started the year on a high note, ending runner-up to top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka at the Brisbane International.

"Despite the setback, Brisbane was a great way to start the year, and I'm thankful for that momentum," she said. "Now it's time to focus on recovery, and I'm excited to be back on court as soon as possible."

PROVIDING HELP

Zeynep Sönmez rushed to the aid of an ailing ballkid in an interruption to play during her first-round upset win over No. 11 Ekaterina Alexandrova.

The 23-year-old Turkish qualifier was receiving serve in the ninth game of the second set when a ballkid wobbled, lost balance and stumbled backward near the umpire's chair in sunny conditions at 1573 Arena.

The ballkid stood up quickly but started wobbling again, and Sönmez immediately held up her hand to suspend play. She went to the courtside and put an arm around the ballkid's waist and helped her toward some shade.

Tournament officials moved quickly to help, but Sönmez had to lift the ballkid into a chair near the side of the arena. Medical staff took over to assess and treat the ballkid in the shade. It appeared to be a heat-related incident, with the temperature at the time around 84 degrees but with high intensity on the exposed hardcourt.

The players waited until the ballkid and the medical staff had left the arena and, after a delay of about seven minutes, continued the match.

Sönmez, ranked No. 112, broke serve in that game but lost the set before rallying to clinch it 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 to advance to the second round in Australia for the first time.

Her best performance in five previous Grand Slam events was a run to the third round at Wimbledon last year.

The tournament said the ballkid quickly recovered but didn't participate in the remainder of the match.

Entertainment Monday

contact us >> ae@timesleader.com

Times Leader | Monday, January 19, 2026 • Section C



Courtesy of Netflix

Emily Bader, left, and Tom Blyth in a scene from 'People We People on Vacation,' now streaming on Netflix.

Does this rom-com live up to the hype?



In Frame
Margaret Roarty



Courtesy of Netflix

Tom Blyth, left, and Emily Bader in a scene from 'People We People on Vacation,' now streaming on Netflix.

Poppy Wright and Alex Nielson are polar opposites. He loves running; she despises it. He sticks to a schedule; she goes with the flow. He thinks their small town of Linfield, Ohio, was a great place to grow up; She can't wait to get as far away from it as possible.

The problem with small towns, Poppy tells him the first day they meet, while on a road trip back home from Boston College, is that people are quick to put you in a box and keep you there forever.

"That's why I wanna travel," she explains. "You can actually be who you wanna be instead of who they say you are."

"People We Meet on Vacation," the new Netflix rom-com starring Emily Bader and Tom Blyth, is about searching for home, and for yourself, from the mountains of Canada to the smoldering sands of Barcelona.

Based on the hugely popular novel by Emily Henry, "People We Meet on Vacation" charts Poppy and Alex's decade-long friendship as they travel the world together. Over time, and after countless adventures, the duo is faced with the inevitable question: Will they ever be able to admit how they really feel about one another?

If you remember from my last column of 2025, this friends-to-lovers romance was one of my most anticipated movies of this year. I absolutely adored the book, and I was really looking forward to seeing the story play out on the big screen.

Unfortunately, while the film's cinematography makes it feel vibrant and alive, the same cannot be said for its writing and direction. Both lack the care and nuance of the source material, and as a result, Bader and Blyth are left with little to work with, despite their individual talents and shared chemistry.

Without the depth of characterization afforded to the book version of our protagonists, the movie versions of Poppy and Alex are nothing more than thinly drawn, cliché archetypes, surrounded by romance tropes that have been done before and better in other movies.

However, the most disappointing thing about "People We Meet on Vacation" is that it has potential. There are moments where it works. But moments are not enough.

The plot

Poppy Wright is a vacation girlie, through and through. She loves exploring new places, meeting new people, and writing about it all for R+R, a New York City-based travel magazine, whose editor Swampna (Jameela Jamil) is her self-professed biggest fan.

Poppy has the life she always wanted, but something is missing. That something becomes obvious when her friend David (Miles Heizer) reminds her about his upcoming Barcelona wedding that she has yet to RSVP for. Poppy doesn't think she should go, especially since David's brother and Poppy's former best friend, Alex, will be there, along with his on-again-off-again girlfriend, Sarah (Sarah Catherine Hook).

But Alex and Sarah have broken up. Maybe for good, this time. Realizing this might be her last chance to fix things with Alex, Poppy takes a chance and goes to the wedding, telling Alex that R+R is sending her there anyway for work.

The film goes back and forth between past and present, recounting the day Poppy and Alex first met, their subsequent vacations together, and the reason why they've recently been distant from one another.

See ROM-COM | 10C

Minutes to Memories

John Mellencamp rolling out jukebox of his old hits

By David Bauder
AP Media Writer

Not every musician has the pull to announce a concert tour with a trailer that stars Sean Penn.

John Mellencamp does. The 74-year-old rocker revealed Wednesday that he'll embark on a 19-date run of U.S. amphitheaters this summer. The theme of "Dancing Words Tour — The Greatest Hits" is as the name suggests, Mellencamp's most extensive rendering of his best-known songs in decades.

In the short film, Mellencamp and Penn are sitting in a diner, the rocker saying he's been asked to do a "greatest hits" tour. He seems reluctant.

"God forbid you become generous with your hits and the soundtrack of people's lives," Penn said. "I can't imagine you would do that. Maybe actually let yourself enjoy it. Just because they're hits doesn't mean they're not great songs."

Twenty-two of Mellencamp's songs made Billboard's Top 40 between 1979 and 1996. Ten made the Top 10, with the peak being the four-week run of "Jack & Diane" at No. 1 in 1982.

It's not like he never performs hits like "Pink Houses," "Hurts So Good," "Small Town" and "Lonely Ol' Night." He'll mix some in with whatever new material he's promoting. But he hasn't rolled out some hits live in a while — "I Need a Lover," not since 2005; the Van Morrison cover "Wild Nights," last heard live in 1997; "Rumbleseat" in 1992; "R.O.C.K. in the USA (A Salute to '60s Rock)" in 2014. He's never played "Rooty Toot Toot" live.

This summer's show will be like the jukebox in the diner where the two men sit — stocked with nothing but his hits.

A waitress walks over and orders the cantankerous men to put out their cigarettes. Her nametag says "Diane," of course. The jukebox roars to life with "Jack & Diane" and the diner "patrons" sing along.

"Let's do it," Mellencamp says.

He sat down recently with The Associated Press to talk about his plans, where he's again lightly scolded about his smoking. But it's over Zoom. It's not illegal.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS: The video with Sean Penn gives the impression that you are kind of dragged into this. How much of that is real and how much of that is acting?

MELLENCAMP: About 20 years ago, I was doing a thing at Madison Square Garden for Pete Seeger (Eds. note: it was 2009). I was talking to Pete and I went, "how do you like this, you know?" And Pete went, well, it's all right occasionally. And I said, you wouldn't want to play these types of places, which were

See MELLENCAMP | 8C



AP File Photo

Singer John Cougar Mellencamp performs at a farmer's rally in Chillicothe, Mo., May 7, 1986.

RAINBOW JEWELERS
KINGSTON, PA 570-287-6257
WE BUY
GOLD, SILVER, COINS, ROLEX

WE BUY ALL GOLD
WE BUY ALL TYPES OF GOLD - ANY KARAT, ANY COLOR, ANY CONDITION, OLD, BROKEN, OR UNWANTED!
- RINGS
- BRACELETS
- NECKLACES
- EARRINGS
- CHARMS
- DENTAL

GOLD/SILVER COINS + BARS
- AMERICAN EAGLES
- KRUGERRANDS
- MAPLE LEAFS
- PANDAS
- BUFFALOS
- PERTH MINT
- HERAEUS
- PAMP SUISSE
- CREDIT SUISSE
- VALCAMBI SUISSE

SILVER
JEWELRY, WATCHES FLATWARE, HOLLOWARE
- ACCESSORIES
- ANTIQUE
- PLATES
- MEDALS

WATCHES
BUYING ROLEX AND GOLD WATCHES
- GMT MASTER II
- SUBMARINER
- DATEJUST
- DAY-DATE

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

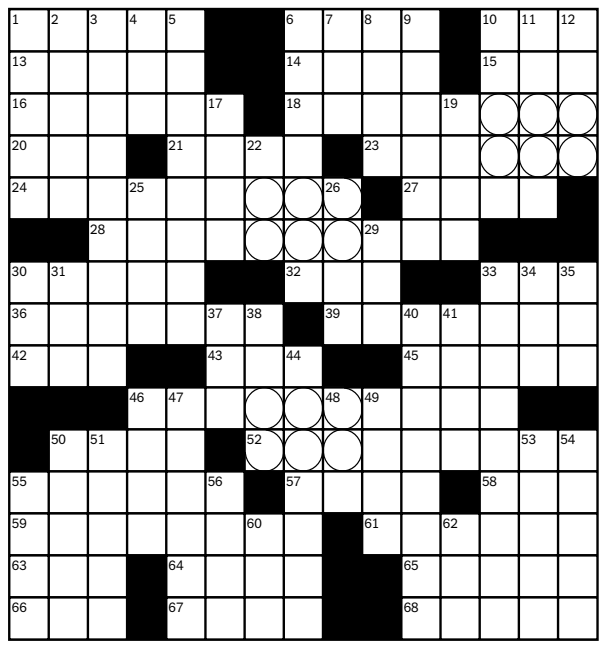
No. 1215

ACROSS

1 ___ Nicholas
6 Judge's seat, from the French
10 N.Y.C. airport
13 "Star Wars" droid, familiarly
14 Side's length squared, for a square
15 Thrilla in Manila boxer
16 Recharge one's batteries
18 Prepared to bathe
20 Cool ___ cucumber
21 "Balderdash!"
23 Filled in (for), for short
24 Schmoozed (with)
27 Good, long bath
28 Slight injury from tripping
30 Bridge support
32 Karl Marx's "___ Kapital"
33 Do one better than
36 President Hoover
39 "You take credit cards?" response
42 Unconventional
43 Alternative to the pill, in brief
45 Dog-___ (like the pages in some books)
46 Foreign-language movie that you don't have to read subtitles for
50 Location for a goatee or soul patch
52 Enchanted
55 Big-beaked tropical bird
57 One-named Brazilian soccer star
58 "If you ask me ...," to texters
59 Camp sleeping spots ... or a hint to this puzzle's circled letters
61 Sci-fi writer Isaac
63 Suitable, as a unit in a bldg.?
64 Tales of yore
65 Join in marriage
66 Lo-___ graphics
67 One-named Grammy winner from Ireland
68 ___ Cottontail

DOWN

1 Wife of Abraham, in the Bible
2 "You ___ right!"
3 "Ridiculous!"
4 "I'm kidding!!," in "Wayne's World"
5 Artist Henri de ___-Lautrec
6 One who's rotten from the start
7 Singer Grande, to fans
8 Loch ___ monster
9 Opera great Enrico
10 Sluglike "Star Wars" crime boss
11 On ___ (looking great, in slang)
12 Colonial-era pirate captain
17 Mr. ___ (Dr Pepper competitor)
19 Orchestral woodwind
22 Be on the wane
25 Crash-investigating org.
26 Turning point in W.W. II
29 When doubled, an African fly
30 But, briefly



PUZZLE BY JEFF JEROME AND ANDREA CARLA MICHAELS

31 Like a ripe strawberry
33 Re-election restriction
34 Many a Wordsworth poem
35 Pea holder
37 Part of a barbecue rack
38 Ernest in the Country Music Hall of Fame
40 Suddenly stops working, as an engine
41 Gov. Tim ___, 2024 running mate
44 Beyond the continental shelf, say
46 Comic actor Van Dyke
47 Lacking the capacity
48 Prez before 10-Across
49 "Deck the Halls" syllables
50 Two-door auto
51 Outings for foxhounds
53 Show feelings onstage
54 Capital of Delaware
55 Lift on the slopes
56 Like bright signs on the Las Vegas Strip
60 Funny in a subtle way
62 Suffix with Benedict or elephant

Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 7,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords ($39.95 a year).

Read about and comment on each puzzle: nytimes.com/wordplay.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

Harry Styles announces first album in 4 years, 'Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally'

By Maria Sherman
AP Music Writer



Columbia Records via AP

This cover image shows 'Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally' by Harry Styles.

NEW YORK — In this world, it's just him: Harry Styles has announced that his long-awaited, fourth studio album will arrive this spring.

Titled "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally" and out March 6, the album is Styles' first full-length project in four years. It follows the 2022, critically acclaimed synth pop record "Harry's House," which earned the former One Direction star the top prize of album of the year at the 2023 Grammy Awards.

In a review, The Associated Press celebrated "Harry's House" for showcasing "a breadth of style that matches the album's emotional range."

On Instagram, Styles' shared the cover artwork for "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally," which features the 31-year-old artist in a T-shirt and jeans at night, standing underneath a shimmering disco ball hung outside.

According to a press release, "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally" will contain 12 tracks and is executive produced by Kid Harpoon. The British songwriter and producer has been a close collaborator of Styles' since the beginning of his solo career, working on all of his albums since the singer's 2017 self-titled debut.

"Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally" is now available for preorder.

It is also Styles' first project since his former One Direction bandmate Liam Payne died in 2024 after falling from a hotel balcony in Argentina.

SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

JUMBLE®

Answer:

STIGMA INFUSE MUFFIN
GYRATE FLINCH SOCIAL

When the hungry taxidermist took a break for lunch, he ended up —

STUFFING HIS FACE

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

CONTACT US

Mary Therese Biebel,
A&E Reporter
570-991-6109
mbiebel@timesleader.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

Birthdays for children 16 and younger and announcements for weddings, anniversaries and engagements are published for free. All content is subject to editing for style and to fit space allotted in the Times Leader on any given day. All other community news submissions are subject to the editorial discretion of Times Leader staff, and the publishing date of any submission cannot be guaranteed.

For birthdays, include phone number, name, age and birthday, names and ages of siblings, parents, grandparents and towns of residents. For weddings, anniversaries and engagements, provide the names and hometowns of the individuals in the couple, the names and hometowns of the couple's parents, and some details about the ceremony; i.e., location, officiant, date to be wed.

Submissions can be emailed to ae@timesleader.com or sent to: Times Leader, 90 E. Market St., Wilkes-Barre, PA, 18701. Photos are not returned unless requested. Time-sensitive material should be received no later than two weeks prior to the event.

WHAT'S UP, NEPA?

GREATER WILKES-BARRE

Wyoming Valley Chapter of The Embroiderers' Guild of America public stitch-in 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Jan. 24, at Barnes & Noble Bookstore in the Arena Hub Plaza in Wilkes-Barre Township. The public is invited to bring something to stitch along with us or to stop by and see what the group is doing.

Pasta Dinner, noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, St. Maria Goretti Church, 42 Laflin Road, Laflin. Includes salad, beverage, dessert, and bread and butter. Eat in or take out, containers provided. Donation $15. Children aged 5 and younger eat free (eat in only). Facilities are handicapped accessible. Parking is ample and free. More info,570-655-8956

Take-out Piggie/ Holubtsi Dinner, noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31, sponsored by Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Dinners may be picked up in the school hall, located at the corner of North River and West Chestnut streets, Wilkes-Barre. Dinners include piggies (cabbage stuffed with meat and rice), mashed potatoes, vegetables, bread and butter, and dessert, $15 for adults and $9 for children 12 and younger. Walk-in customers are welcome, but reservations are strongly recommended. Call (570) 829-3051.

Big Band Society February Dinner Dance, Friday, Feb. 6, Dupont Hose Co., 308 Main St., Dupont. Doors open at 5:30, dinner served at 6 p.m., dancing 7 to 10 p.m. Cost is $35 per member, $40 for non-members. Menu includes salad, Gary's Famous Pizza, roast beef, breaded pork chops, chicken scampi, oven-roasted potatoes, mixed veggies, ziti with meat sauce, cole slaw, and dessert. Entertainer Mike Haroshak has arranged a "Flamingo Fling" theme so please wear pink or at least a pink accessory. Photos will be taken with the flamingo mascot. Any questions, call Mary Ann at 570-298-1616.

KINGSTON/ WEST SIDE

COCU Grief Share is meeting on Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Church of Christ Uniting, 190 S. Sprague Ave., Kingston. It is a program that utilizes conversation and video presentations to support individuals grieving the loss of a loved one. Call Phyllis for more info at 570-690-1342.

Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 644 of Swoyersville, will meet at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 21, at the post home. Membership dues are now being accepted. Upcoming Lenten Dinners and Mother's Day Breakfast will be discussed. All members are encouraged to attend. Commander Thomas Walsh will preside. Visit our Facebook page @ Sons of the American Legion Squadron 644.

Kingston Historical Society will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22, in the council chambers of the Kingston Municipal Building on Wyoming Avenue in Kingston. Anyone wishing to join the Kingston Historical Society may attend a meeting or request information by mail at PO Box 1702, Kingston, PA 18704.

TUNKHANNOCK

Winter Fest 2026 Preview Day, 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Feb. 12. Do you want to get a better idea of what the Dietrich's Winter Fest 2026 movies are about? See the trailers that hooked us and made us choose them. Join us for a preevent to Winter Fest 2026 and screen all 21 movie trailers from the films featured in this festival. Admission is free, and concessions are discounted. For more information, please call the Dietrich at 570-836-1022 ext. 3.

MOUNTAIN TOP

Mountain Top Social Club will resume meetings Feb. 10 and Feb. 24 at the American Legion, 1550 Henry Drive, Mountain Top. For club information, please call Carol, Vice President, at 570-868-5990. For trip information, contact Dolores, trip coordinator, 1-732-690-9609. Membership in the club has been temporarily closed. Check back for information.

NANTICOKE

Community Worship Service & Free Lunch, noon Wednesday, Jan. 21, Nanticoke First Church, 267 East Main St., Nanticoke. For more information, call 570-258-2822.

Faculty & Alumni Art Exhibition opening reception, 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23 at Schulman Gallery, Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke. The snow date is Monday, Jan. 26. The exhibit will be Jan. 23 through Feb. 20.

See WHAT'S UP | 5C

JUMBLE®

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CTPHA

REETX

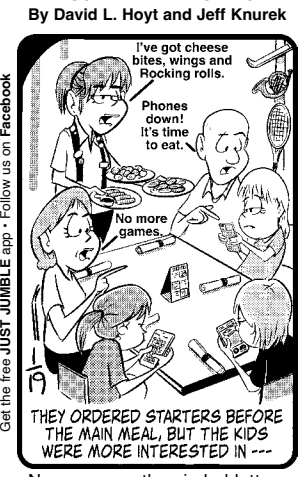
NIAQTU

MSPIRH

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook

©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

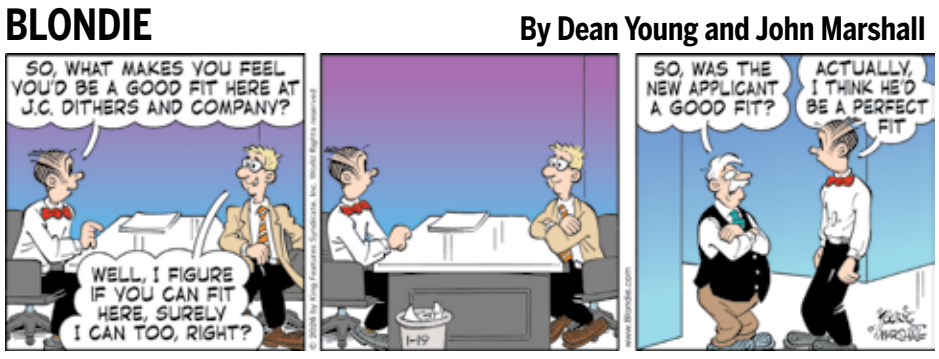
Answer here: ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: DROLL MULCH CHANGE KERNEL
Answer: The FBI agents kept questioning the alleged money launderer hoping he'd — COME CLEAN

BLONDIE

By Dean Young and John Marshall



BEETLE BAILEY

By Mort, Greg and Brian Walker



MACANUDO

By Liniers



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

By Chris Browne



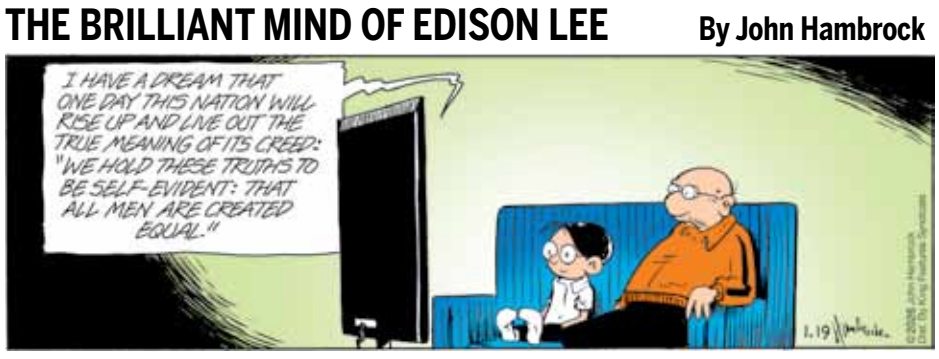
HI AND LOIS

Written By Brian & Greg Walker; Drawn By Chance Browne



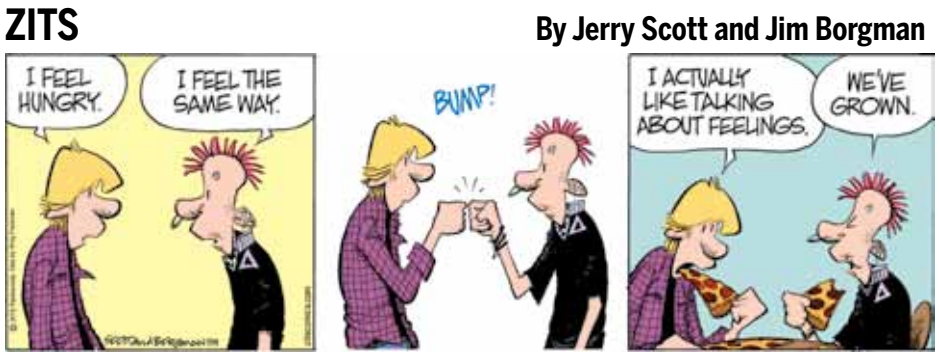
THE BRILLIANT MIND OF EDISON LEE

By John Hambrock



ZITS

By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman



RHYMES WITH ORANGE

By Hilary Price



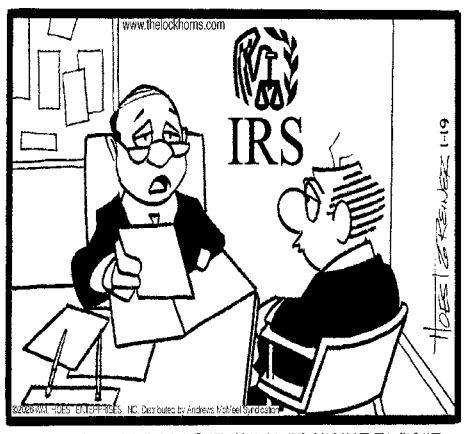
Hank Ketcham's

DENNIS THE MENACE



THE LOCKHORNS

By Bunny Hoest & John Reiner



THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil and Jeff Keane



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

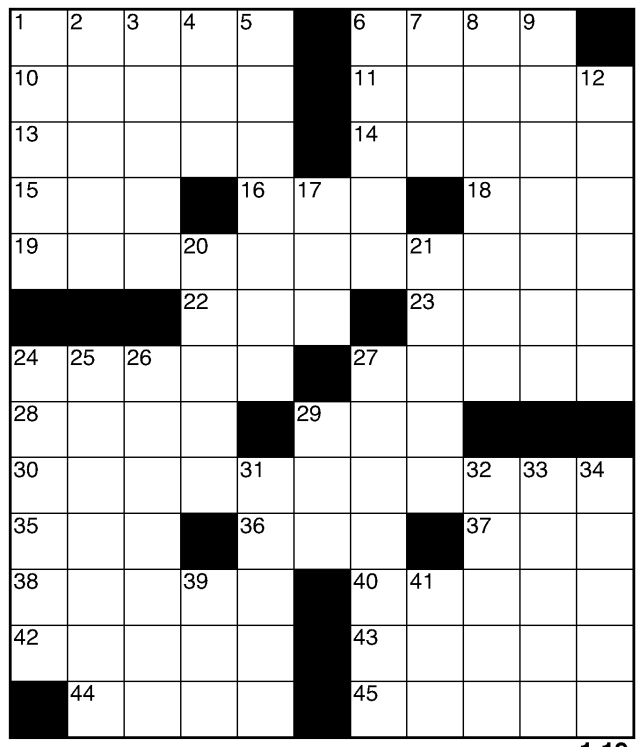
1 Pottery piece
6 Church area
10 Forbidden
11 Site of a Martin Luther King march
13 O'Connor's successor
14 Close, as a winter port
15 Homer's neighbor
16 Scepter
18 Conclude
19 1975 Gary Wright song
22 Sprinted
23 Painter Magritte
24 Like the game, to Holmes
27 Scenic outlook
28 Frosh housing
29 "Sprechen — Deutsch?"
30 1979 Cheap Trick song
35 Table part
36 Olive of cartoons
37 Beanie or beret
38 Online messages
40 Steer clear of
42 Tightly packed
43 Hint of color
44 — de plume (pen names)
45 Fills completely

DOWN

1 Get to one's feet
2 More robust
3 Tolerate
4 Turn bad
5 "Welcome" site
6 Digression
7 Chest muscle, for short
8 Shirt parts
9 Famous
12 Tenor Bocelli
17 Possess
20 Fragrance
21 Disney's mermaid
24 Mixed up
25 Jury heads
26 Pizzeria herb
27 Colorful flowers
29 Secret agent
31 Burrowing mammals
32 Defeatist's words
33 Be a sponge
34 Fencing swords
39 Belief, in brief
41 Through

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

Saturday's answer



1-19

BABY BLUES

By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



PARDON MY PLANET

By Vic Lee



CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

by Dave Green

King Classic Sudoku

8		3						
	6	7	9	3		1		2
2	4	9	8	5	1			
	3		5		8		7	
			1	6	9	5	4	3
		6	2					1
1	7	5		9	6		2	8
6		2	3					
				1				

Difficulty: ★ 1/19

©2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Today's Solution

Difficulty: ★ 1/19

3	8	4	7	1	2	9	6	5
6	9	2	3	8	5	7	1	4
1	7	5	4	9	6	3	2	8
4	5	6	2	7	3	8	9	1
7	2	8	1	6	9	5	4	3
9	3	1	5	4	8	2	7	6
2	4	9	8	5	1	6	3	7
5	6	7	9	3	4	1	8	2
8	1	3	6	2	7	4	5	9

©2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc.



Having A Yard Sale?

Call your classified department to schedule your ad today!

Reflections for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Dear Readers: Wishing you all a very happy Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Please enjoy this excerpt from one of the most famous American speeches ever made.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed — we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

"I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

"I have a dream today!



Dear Annie
Annie Lane

"I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

"I have a dream today!

"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

"This is our hope. This is the faith that I will go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.

"With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

"This will be the day, this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning: 'My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.' And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

"And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

"Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

"Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

"Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

"Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California.

"But not only that.

"Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

"Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

"Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!

"And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: 'Free at last! Free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'"

WORD SLEUTH • MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

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

Saturday's unlisted clue: BOW TIE

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.
Monday's unlisted clue hint: — PEACE PRIZE

Alabama, Boycott, Civil rights, Coretta, Dream, Equality, Freedom, Justice, Leader, March, Minister, Nonviolence, Peace, SCLC, Sermon

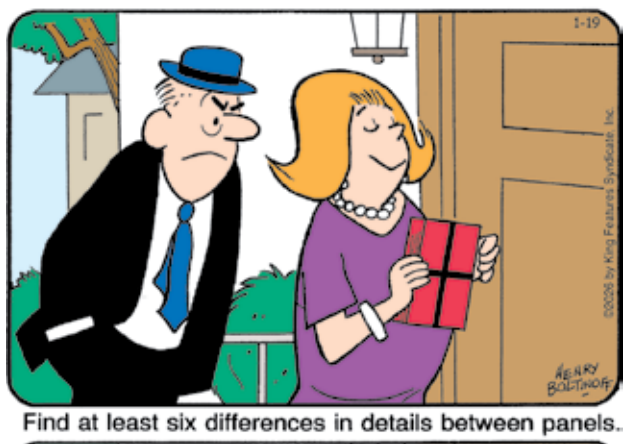
©2026 King Features, Inc. 1/19

1-19 CRYPTOQUIP

REBYM RBI QM WBKKTJ CGYYX IDTI MHEOBCDYC CHMMBUBYOI YOYEFJ MQE WTSBOF CWTGG ITGS: T UDTI-OTX.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: FAMED ACTOR WITH A BAD HABIT OF MAKING MANY CREASES IN PAPER AND CLOTHES: HENRY WRINKLER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals G



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Box is larger. 2. Tie is longer. 3. Bracelet is moved. 4. Roof is different. 5. Railing is shorter. 6. Finger is moved.

HOROSCOPE

Moon Alert: There are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions today. The Moon is in AQUARIUS.

Happy Birthday for Monday, Jan. 19, 2026:

You're determined, inquisitive, curious and detail-oriented. You're truly original. Your creativity, zest and desire for life are at a pinnacle! Socialize and enjoy relationships. Nurture the happiness and beauty that you have within. Let your guard down and loosen up a bit! Old friends might reappear.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ This is a fun-loving, exuberant day for you! Bosses, parents and VIPs might make a move that you didn't expect. Hopefully, it will bless your pocketbook. Something going on behind the scenes might surprise you as well. You feel restless and ready for change. Romance is blessed! A friend could become a lover. Tonight: Be friendly.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You make a great impression on others today, which means you can demand the advantage. Sudden opportunities to travel might fall in your lap. Or these opportunities could relate to medicine, the law or publishing. Someone older might surprise you today. Tonight: You're admired.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Today is full of unexpected surprises that will bless you. Meanwhile, you're keen to do anything to expand your world, because you need a change of scenery. Romance with someone "different" might blossom. Interactions with others about shared property could bless you, financially speaking. Tonight: Explore!

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ People are unpredictable today, especially partners and close friends. Stay light on your feet, because you can't be sure what's coming your way. Meanwhile, rules and regulations that might have held you back in the past could suddenly change today. Voila! Tonight: Check your finances.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Your routine might change today. Technical problems might arise or equipment might suffer from a glitch. Check banking, because something unexpected could impact shared property, taxes and debt or your bank account. Cooperate with others today. Go along to get along. Tonight: Listen.

See HOROSCOPE | 5C

MONDAY EVENING — JANUARY 19, 2026

LOCAL	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30
WNEP 16	News (N)	World News	Newswatch	Inside Ed.	Will Trent (TV14)		Will Trent (TV14)		To Be Announced (TVPG)	
WNEP2 16.2	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	News (N)	Jeffersons
WYOU 22	28/22 News	CBS-News	28/22 News	ET (N)	Neighbor	DMV	FBI "Captured" (TV14)		NCIS: Origins (TV14)	
WBRE 28	(5:00) Basketball Dallas Mavericks at New York Knicks				NBA Basketball Boston Celtics at Detroit Pistons (L) (N)					
WYLN 35	History	EARLY EDIT	The Daily Flash		Let's Talk	Warrior	Wine H	Kitchen	WYLN LATE	History
WSWB 38	Family Feud	Family Feud	FamFeud (N)	Family Feud	I Am MLK Jr. (TVPG)				National Desk (L) (N)	
METV 38.2	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	A. Griffith	A. Griffith	Raymond	Raymond	Hogan Hero	Hogan Hero
WVIA 44	PBS News Hour (N)		Keystone Edition: Arts		Antiques (N) (TVG)		Antiques Roadshow (TVG)		Becoming Thurgood	
WQMY 53	TMZ (N)	Extra (N)	Dateline (TVPG)		Law-SVU "Legacy" (TV14)		Law & Order: SVU (TV14)		Dateline (TV14)	
WOLF 56	(5:00) Wm. Basketball		Big Bang	Big Bang	Hell's Kitchen (TV14)		Doc (TVPG)		News First at Ten (L) (N)	
WQPX 64	Blue Bloods (TV14)		Chicago P.D. (TV14)		Chicago P.D. (TV14)		Chicago P.D. (TV14)		Chicago P.D. (TV14)	
KYW 3	News (N)	CBS-News	Inside Ed.	ET (N)	Neighbor	DMV	FBI "Captured" (TV14)		NCIS: Origins (TV14)	
WWOR 9	The 6 O'clock News (TV14)		FamFeud (N)	Family Feud	The News on MY 9 (N)		Law & Order: SVU (TV14)		Family Feud	Family Feud
WPXI 11	(5:00) Basketball Dallas Mavericks at New York Knicks				NBA Basketball Boston Celtics at Detroit Pistons (L) (N)					
WPHL 17	Goldbergs	Big Bang	Big Bang	Mod Fam	I Am MLK Jr. (TVPG)				Action News at 10 (N)	

CABLE	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30
A&E	Storage Wars (TVPG)		Storage Wars (TVPG)		Storage Wars (TVPG)		Storage Wars (TVPG)		Storage Wars (TVPG)	
AMC	(5:00) ★★ Lethal Weapon 4 ('98) Mel Gibson. (TVPG)				★★★ Beverly Hills Cop ('84) Eddie Murphy. (TVG)				(:15) Beverly Hills Cop II	
BBCA	Movie		★★★ Sleepy Hollow ('99) Johnny Depp. (TVPG)				★★ Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters ('13) (TVPG)			
BRAVO	Below Deck Down (TV14)		Below Deck (TV14)		Below Deck (N) (TV14)		Watch What	Vanderpump Rules (TV14)		Below Deck
CNBC	Leader	Leader	Shark Tank (TVPG)		Shark Tank (TVPG)		Shark Tank (TVPG)		Shark Tank (TV14)	
CNN	Jake Tapper (L) (N)		E. B. OutFront (L) (N)		Cooper 360 (L) (N) (TVPG)		The Source With (L) (N)		CNN NewsNight (L) (N)	
COMC	The Office	The Office	The Office	:35 Office	:10 Office	:45 Office	(:20) The Office (TV14)		:55 Office	The Office
CTV	EWTN News	Living	Daily Mass: Olam (TVG)		Journey (N) (TVG)		EWTN News	Rosary (N)	World Over Live (TVG)	
DISC	Contraband: Seized (TV14)		Contraband: Seized (TV14)		Contraband (N) (TV14)		120 Hours Be (N) (TV14)		Contraband: Seized (TV14)	
DISN	(:15) ★★★ The Princess and the Frog ('09) (TVG)				★★★ Soul ('20) Jamie Foxx. (TVG)			:45 Vampirina	(:10) Electric	(:35) Kiff
E!	★ Expend4bles ('23) Jason Statham. (P) (TV14)				★★ Starsky & Hutch ('04) Ben Stiller. (TVG)				★ Expend4bles (TV14)	
ESPN	(5:00) College GameDay		Ram Trucks		Nat'l Champ. Miami vs. Indiana From Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla. (L) (N)					
ESPN2	SportsCenter		Ram Trucks		CFP National Championship Field Pass with The Pat McAfee Show: Miami vs. Indiana (L) (N)					
FNC	Special Report (L) (N)		The Ingraham Angle (L) (N)		Jesse Watters (L) (N)		Hannity (L) (N)		Gutfeld! (N)	
FOOD	Wildcard Kitchen (TVPG)		Baking "Family Favorite"		Baking Championship		Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby
FREE	Movie		★★★ Up ('09) Edward Asner. (TVG)				(:35) ★★★ Coco ('17) Anthony Gonzalez. (TVG)			
FS1	College Basketball Providence at Marquette (L) (N)				Hoops		Women's College Basketball Michigan vs. Vanderbilt			Basketball
FX	5:30 Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian				★★ Uncharted ('22) Tom Holland.					Movie
FXM	(5:50) ★★★ Bohemian Rhapsody ('18) Rami Malek. (TVG)						(:35) ★★★ Bohemian Rhapsody ('18) Rami Malek. (TVG)			
HALL	Frozen in Love ('18) Rachael Leigh Cook. (TVG)				Winter in Vail ('20) Lacey Chabert. (TVG)				The Birthday Wish	
HGTV	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Don't Hate Your (N) (TVG)		Neighbor	Neighbor	Hunters	Hunters
HIST	History's-Mysteries (TVPG)		History's-Mysteries (TVPG)		History's-Mysteries (TVPG)		History's-Mysteries (TVPG)		(:05) Mysteries (TVPG)	
LIFE	NCIS "Thirst" (TV14)		NCIS (TVPG)		NCIS (TVPG)		NCIS (TV14)		(:05) NCIS (TVPG)	
MTV	Big Bang	Big Bang	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous
NBCSP	Birds (N)	Sixers (N)	NBA Basketball Indiana Pacers at Philadelphia 76ers (L) (N)					Sixers (L) (N)		Birds Huddle
NGEO	Lost Treasures (TVPG)		Lost Treasures (TVPG)		Lost Treasures (TVPG)		Lost Treasures (TVPG)		Lost Treasures (TVPG)	
NICK	Movie	SpongeBob	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Big Bang	Big Bang
OVA	(4:30) Midsomer (TVPG)		Murdoch Mysteries (TVPG)		Murdoch (N) (TV14)		Murdoch Mysteries (TVPG)		Murdoch Mysteries (TVPG)	
PARMT	4:10 Indiana Jones & the ...		★★★★ Raiders of the Lost Ark ('81) Harrison Ford. (TVG)					:35 Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade		
SYFY	(5:30) ★★★ Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone ('01) Daniel Radcliffe. (TVG)						Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (TVG)			
TBS	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang
TCM	4:30 King: A Filmed Record... Montgomery to Memphis				I Heard It Through the Grapevine ('82)				★★★ Malcolm X (TVPG)	
TLC	90 Day: Other (TV14)		90 Day: Other (TVPG)		90 Day "Ayo" (N) (TV14)		(:05) 90 Day (N) (TV14)		(:05) 90 Day (N) (TV14)	
TNT	(4:00) NHL Hockey		Post-Game	Unrivaled	Unrivaled Basketball		(:15) Unrivaled Basketball			Unrivaled
TOON	Burgers	Burgers	Burgers	Burgers	Burgers	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy
TRAV	Mysteries of the Unknown (TVPG)				Mysteries of the Unknown (TVPG)				Mysteries- Unk. (TVPG)	
TVL	A. Griffith	A. Griffith	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond
USA	Law & Order: SVU (TV14)		Law & Order: SVU (TV14)		Law & Order: SVU (TV14)		Law & Order: SVU (TV14)		Law & Order: SVU (TV14)	
VH1	Love & Hip Hop (TV14)		Love "Boy Band" (TV14)		Bsk. Wives (TV14)		Bsk. Wives (TV14)		Bsk. Wives (TV14)	
WE	Criminal Minds (TV14)		Criminal Minds (TV14)		Criminal Minds (TV14)		Criminal Minds (TV14)		Criminal Minds (TV14)	
YOUTOO	Dick	Dick Tracy	Daily Flash		World Chase Tag		Disaster Strike Force		The Dark Zone	

PREMIUM	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30
HBO	(5:05) The Town (TVPG)		(:15) A Knight (TVMA)		Industry (TVMA)		★★ Monster-in-Law ('05) (TVG)			:45 A Knight
HBO2	Industry (TVMA)		(:05) King in the Wilderness ('18)				Industry (TVMA)		A Knight	:45 Logan
MAX	(5:45) ★★ Suicide Squad ('16) (TVG)			(:45) ★★★ The Suicide Squad ('21) Margot Robbie. (TVPG)					The Farewell (TVG)	
MMAX	(5:45) ★ Repo Men ('10) (TV14)			(:35) ★★ The Mummy ('17) Tom Cruise. (TVPG)				(:25) A Nightmare on Elm Street		
SHOW	Movie		★★★ The Martian ('15) Matt Damon. (TVG)				Coldwater	(:50) ★★ Grudge Match ('13) (TVG)		
STARZ	(:20) ★★★ About Last Night ('14) Kevin Hart. (TVPG)				Critics Choice (TV14)		BMF Docu	Power IV (TVMA)		:35 Nowhere

Try out these tips from a pet sitter

Dear Heloise: As a pet sitter, I read with interest the letter from Mandy, in Texas, regarding things that pet owners should remember to do before leaving their pet for a few days. She had really good tips, but I'd like to add a few that are usually forgotten:

— Leave your plumber's, electrician's and landlord's numbers handy, as well as the number for a neighbor or friend.

— Leave your complete correct address and phone number. Many times, sitters don't know the correct address.

— Leave a note or inform your vet that your pet is to be treated if brought in by the sitter.

— I also tell my clients that I will give them a ring after I have made the proper calls (to the plumber, electrician, fire department, etc.) or transported the pet. Always handle an emergency first since time is of the essence. — E., in Connecticut



Hints from Heloise
Heloise

small amount (as little as one raisin in some pets) can cause severe kidney failure and/or death. Contact your vet immediately if they ingest grapes or raisins as this can be a medical emergency.

So, please educate your children, or better yet, for the safety of your pet, choose a different healthy snack. — Barbara K., in East Aurora, New York

A MEDICAL MESS

Dear Heloise: To your reader Fran R., from San Antonio: Most doctors want to spend their appointment time speaking face-to-face with a patient. Currently, most patients complain of "shorter encounters" with their doctors. It has become this way with our medical system because of time-consuming mandates that are given by the government and insurance companies.

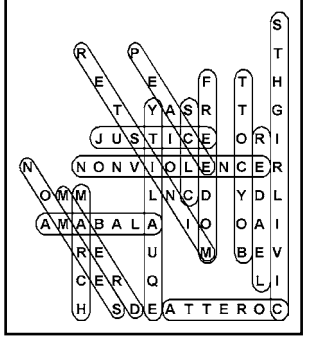
See HINTS | 5C

SEND A GREAT HINT TO:
Heloise@Heloise.com

THE DANGER OF RAISINS

Dear Heloise: In a recent column, someone suggested a little red box of raisins as a healthy snack for children. Please be careful, however, if you have dogs or cats. Grapes and especially raisins are toxic to them. Even a

Today's Answers
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.





Jérôme Prébois | Sony Pictures Classics via AP

This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Jodie Foster in a scene from 'A Private Life.'

MOVIE REVIEW

Jodie Foster shines as a psychoanalyst on the edge in 'A Private Life'

By Lindsey Bahr
AP Film Writer

Jodie Foster plays a self-assured psychoanalyst whose composure unravels after a patient unexpectedly dies in the genre-bending French film "A Private Life."

Rebecca Zlotowski's latest is part noir, part comedy of remarriage, and part Freudian fever dream about past lives.

This is a film that does not abide by rules or play into any easy expectations about what it should be, resulting in big swings, tonal shifts and even a lurking Holocaust through-line. Also, oddly enough considering such grave themes and subjects, it's all done with a relatively light touch set, in part, by the cheeky needle drop at its opening: the Talking Heads song "Psycho Killer." Some parts work better than others, but you can't help but admire the go-for-broke originality and unabashed femininity of it all. And anchoring it all is Foster, using the full force of her star power and impeccable French to make "A Private Life," unwieldy and complex as it is, go down as easy as a glass of gamay.

Foster's character, Dr. Lilian Steiner, is an American expat living and working in France. She's an accomplished, sophisticated woman who believes she has a grasp on people and the world around her, recording and cataloging all her private sessions with clients on meticulously organized CDs. This act in and of itself is a little odd — her son wonders why she doesn't just use a more modern method, for instance. But it also kind of gets to the heart of why, perhaps, despite her evident intelligence, there's a cold disconnect between analyst and subject. Is she even listening to them?

Lilian starts to wonder this herself after she receives a call that her client Paula (Virginie Efira) has died by suicide. Paula was not someone she believed was capable of this. Instead of looking inward, she goes back to the tapes to begin an amateur investigation to find some other explanation: It must be murder, she concludes. Suspects include Paula's daughter Valérie (Luàna Bajrami) and husband Simon (Mathieu Amalric).

She also enlists a sidekick in her sleuthing, her ex-husband Gabriel (a delightful Daniel Auteuil) who is more than happy to go along for the ride, to listen to her conspiracy theories over several bottles of wine, to be a decoy distraction so that she can snoop through Simon's house, and, ultimately, to just be there for her, no matter how unhinged she's becoming. You can just see the love and admiration in his attentiveness. He's not off put by the crazy; it's just part of what makes her, well, her. Their rekindled relationship, so effortlessly lived in, so mature, so fun, is by far the highlight of "A Private Life."

It's a shame that their romance is basically a side show to the more convoluted rest, which involves a hypnotist and a revelation of a past life in which Lilian and Paula were members of the same WWII-era orchestra and lovers torn apart by jealous exes and Nazis. One of those Nazis is Lilian's son (Vincent Lacoste), which she awkwardly, drunkenly tells him at his birthday dinner to try to explain why they've never been that close. She's also completely disinterested in her grandchild, which might be one "let's unpack that" too many in this film. In other words, there's a lot going on in "A Private Life," which Zlotowski co-wrote with Anne Berest.



Jérôme Prébois | Sony Pictures Classics via AP

This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Jodie Foster, left, and Virginie Efira in a scene from 'A Private Life.'



Jérôme Prébois | Sony Pictures Classics via AP

This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Jodie Foster, left, and Daniel Auteuil in a scene from 'A Private Life.'

One thing there's not enough of is Efira. She gets some moments in flashback, but most of them teeter on the "dead wife montage" cliche. It's not that Zlotowski wasn't aware of what she had in Efira (case in point, their poignant, tender work together in "Other People's Children"), but perhaps she was counting on our familiarity to fill in the gaps.

"A Private Life" is ultimately Foster's show anyway and she seems to relish the tricky assignment. The tone around her might be on the lighter side, but for Lilian, the stakes are grave with the very essence of her self-worth and life's work on the line. It's a fascinating portrait of a woman essentially forced to rethink and revise all of the rules she'd lived by, the facts that she made sense of the world with and submit herself to the idea that some things might just be unknowable — even for a know-it-all psychoanalyst.

"A Private Life," a Sony Pictures Classics release in theaters now, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "language, graphic nudity, brief violence, some sexual content." Running time: 105 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Horoscope

From page 4C

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Innovative ideas might occur to you today. It's also a wonderful day to socialize! Upsets in sports events might occur. A social occasion might be canceled or delayed. Parents should be vigilant to avoid accidents with your kids. Keep your eyes peeled! Tonight: Get better organized.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ This is a playful, fun-loving day! You'll enjoy warmhearted interactions with others. You might even be inspired. Be aware that your home routine might suddenly change, so stay light on your feet. It's a great day for fun outings and romance. Keep swiping, because new love might be waiting to meet you. Tonight: Socialize.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Pay attention to everything you say and do today because is a mildly accident-prone day. Nevertheless, all your interactions with others are warm and friendly. You might see new and innovative ways of doing something, especially related to the entertainment world or the hospitality industry. Tonight: Relax.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ You can be impulsively extravagant, and today is one of those days. Be careful. If you spontaneously make a big purchase, keep your receipts and the box. Double-check your money and possessions to make sure everything's cool, because something unexpected could impact them. Tonight: Conversations.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You're full of electric, buzzy energy today, which is why you might not know which way to turn first. One thing is certain, you will be attracted to new ideas, new experiences and new ventures. You'll be innovative and quick to come up with new solutions. Tonight: Check your possessions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ You might have some amazing, original moneymaking ideas today. If so, don't dismiss them. Write them down to reconsider them later. Today when it comes to finances, you can think outside the box. You also might make some impulsive wardrobe purchases. (Keep your receipts.) Tonight: You're in charge.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ A friend might surprise you today or perhaps a member of a group. Changes that you made several years ago might now take shape. You're starting to see that your life is different, and perhaps things are more appropriate to what you are. Conversations with younger people will be lively, perhaps even competitive. Tonight: Enjoy privacy.

BORN TODAY

Singer-songwriter, actress, philanthropist Dolly Parton (1946), actress, singer Katey Sagal (1954), Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee (1807)

Hints

From page 4C

Staff must provide volumes of information for bills, as well as electronically record the visit while also reducing or denying the payment for the visit. This has forced physicians to see more patients, with less time for each patient. To optimize the face-to-face time with each patient (and often late-arriving patients), patients are asked to come in earlier to have the administrative information filled out and reduce any loss of face-to-face time.

It would be even more effective for a patient to discuss their insurance or government plans beforehand. This would reduce the volume of administrative information that billing and recordkeeping requires, which also interferes with their time with their physician. — Coleen, M.D., via email

Coleen, I know that medicine is not what it was when I was a child. We now have nonmedical personnel making life-or-death decisions. Many times, they disagree with the doctor's opinion, and this worries me.

I have wondered how someone who hasn't physically seen me and doesn't have a license can practice medicine. If they're miles away in another state, I'm not sure that they can determine what I might need or not need. There are offices that have one or two people who do nothing but fight with insurance companies all day long!

I wish there was an easy solution to these problems, but we need to keep after our representatives in Congress so that they can revise our health care system. And we need to make some changes now before our doctors and nurses burn out and quit. — Heloise

What's up

From page 2C

GREATER PITTSTON

The Jacquelines will meet at 7 p.m. Jan. 20 in the Knights building, 55 South Main Street, Pittston. Yearly dues will be accepted at this meeting.

BACK MOUNTAIN

Bingo Night at Northmoreland Volunteer Fire Co., 1618 Demunds Road, Centermoreland, 6:30 p.m. Jan. 19, Feb. 2, Feb. 16. No reservation is needed for Monday Night Bingo. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

A new Grief Share support group at Cross Creek Community Church, 370 Carverton Road, Trucksville, 570-696-0399, will meet every Wednesday, 1 to 3 p.m., through April 1. The support group is free and open to the public. Please register online at griefshare.org/findagroup

Roast Beef Dinner at Northmoreland Volunteer Fire Co., 1618 Demunds Road, Centermoreland, next to the Centermoreland Store, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 28. Eat in or take out. Dinner includes roast beef, real mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetables, and dessert.

Indoor Garage Sale, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, Dallas Eastern Star Hall, Foster Street, Dallas (behind CVS drugstore). Come and see our selection of gently used and new items, including a wide range of books. Someone else's trash may be your treasure. Snow date is Feb. 8.

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

The Junior League of Scranton is welcoming applications for potential new members. In addition, the Junior League of Scranton has a new phone number for all future contact. We kindly request that any community partners who need to contact our organization by phone use 570-209-9335 and update their records accordingly. The Junior League of Scranton is an organization of women whose mission is to advance women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training.

Trinity Lutheran Church Fun for Seniors Group, from Trinity Lutheran Church, 205 West Grove, Clarks Summit. The church continues to sponsor a weekly "Fun For Seniors Exercise for Balance and Strength" class with Mindy, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. each Wednesday. For more info, contact office@trinitylutherancs.com

REUNIONS

Coughlin High School class of 1959 will meet 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22, at Adelina's Restaurant, 77 East Market Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA, in Genetti's Best Western. All classmates, spouses, and members of Coughlin High School Classes of 1958 and 1960 are welcome. Call Fran at 570-261-4121 if you plan to attend.

GAR High School class of 1952 will meet for lunch at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, in the back party room of the Pierce Street Deli, Pierce Street, Kingston. All grads, partners, and friends are welcome.

The Pittston Area High School class of 1981 is planning a 45th anniversary reunion for June 6 at Colarusso's La Palazzo on Birney Avenue in Moosic, and the committee is attempting to contact classmates. If you have contact information for yourself or any other classmate, please get in touch with Kelly Gowran Steiner at 480-414-5671 or kellysteineraz@gmail.com/. For more information, see the Pittston Class of 1981 Facebook page.



JAKE AND ELWOOD

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

You know them as Joliet Jake and Elwood Blues, the brothers who are paroled from an Illinois State Prison and embark on a "mission from God" to keep tax officials from foreclosing on the Catholic orphanage where they were raised. Along the way, they rub elbows with some of the great blues musicians of the day.

But before that 1980 film, Jake and Elwood — played by John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd — were cast members on "Saturday Night Live." They first performed their blues act on Jan. 17, 1976: a half-century ago.

THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE, WEARING ... BEE COSTUMES?

Comedian Dan Aykroyd introduced his performing colleague, John Belushi, to the blues. Aykroyd could play the harmonica. Belushi had always wanted to sing in a rock band.

They were both hired as cast members on NBC's new late-night live sketch comedy series, "Saturday Night Live." One of the running gags featured in the first season of the show were skits in which actors, for no particular reason, wore bee costumes.

These two threads merged on the 10th episode of the show when Belushi and Aykroyd performed Slim Harpo's 1957 song "I'm a King Bee" wearing bee costumes. Both wore shades while Aykroyd also wore a dark hat. They were billed as "Howard Shore and His All-Bee Band" — Shore being the show's musical director.

Aykroyd remained in the shadows as Belushi sang lead and finished the song with a series of comically failed somersaults, cartwheels and flips.

The audience loved it. But the number was a one-off piece, and Belushi and Aykroyd both knew it. It wasn't until the hiatus between SNL seasons 2 and 3, when Belushi spent the summer in Eugene, Oregon, filming "Animal House," that his itch to perform resurfaced. He began frequenting performances by "Roomful of Blues" and admired their dark suits, ties and Ray Ban glasses.

Upon his return to New York, Belushi and Aykroyd began performing a blues act at the Holland Tunnel Blues Bar, a private club Aykroyd had bought. They asked the new SNL musical director, Paul Shaffer, to help them recruit a band. SNL producer Lorne Michaels allowed the team to perform as a warm-up act for live broadcasts.

On April 22, 1978, Michaels had the Blues Brothers perform as the show's musical guest. They sang "Hey Bartender" and "I Don't Know." Impressed, Steve Martin asked the band to open for him at a series of LA-area shows.

It was during those shows the Blues Brothers' debut album, "Briefcase Full of Blues," including a top-20 single, was recorded. A movie deal followed not long after.



Jan. 17, 1976: Singing "I'm a King Bee" with the entire SNL house band dressed as bees.



April 22, 1978: Wearing suits, hats and Ray-Bans and singing "Hey Bartender."



September 1978: Opening for Steve Martin at the Universal Amphitheater.



June 20, 1980: "The Blues Brothers" movie opens nationwide.

BLUES BROTHERS ALBUMS ...

The Blues Brothers released only four albums before the death of John Belushi in March 1982.



Briefcase full of Blues
RELEASED: Nov. 28, 1978
PEAK ON THE BILLBOARD 200 ALBUM CHART: #1



The Blue Brothers: Original Soundtrack Recording
RELEASED: June 20, 1980
#13



Made in America
RELEASED: Dec. 5, 1980
#49



Best of the Blues Brothers
RELEASED: Nov. 30, 1981
#143

... AND CHARTED SINGLES

Only four Blues Brothers single releases charted in the Billboard Hot 100.

PEAK IN THE HOT 100

RELEASED: Feb. 16, 1979
Soul Man #14

RELEASED: April 6, 1979
Rubber Biscuit #37

RELEASED: May 1980
Gimme Some Lovin' #18

RELEASED: December 1981
Who's Making Love #39

Sources: "Live from New York: An Uncensored History of 'Saturday Night Live' " by Tom Shales and James Andrew Miller, "Saturday Night Live FAQ" by Stephen Tropiano, American Songwriter, Ultimate Classic Rock, Internet Movie Database, the Guardian, Vanity Fair, Mental Floss Primetimer.com, Blues BrothersOfficialSite.com, Discogs.com, History.com

SNL PHOTOS FROM NBC. BLUES BROTHERS MOVIE PHOTOS FROM UNIVERSAL PICTURES. ALBUM COVERS FROM ATLANTIC RECORDS.

Q&A: Don Was talks John Mayer, staying sharp, curbing phone addiction

By Adam Graham
The Detroit News

DETROIT — Don Was is a musician, a producer, a record label president, a radio host and a key figure in the music business going back to the 1970s. He's worked with everyone from Bob Dylan to Bonnie Raitt to Bob Seger to the B-52s to the Black Crowes, and that's just the Bs.

Ahead of a recent two-night stand with Don Was and the Pan-Detroit Ensemble in Ann Arbor, we talked to the Oak Park native, 73, about playing with his homegrown nine-piece band, staving off phone addiction, and working with superstar artists like John Mayer.

"Obliterating self-consciousness is the key to everything," says Was, on the phone in December from his home in Los Angeles. With that, here is our Q&A with the six-time Grammy winner and likely future Rock & Roll Hall of Famer. (Note: Questions and answers have been edited for length and clarity.)

Q: What is your relationship like with your phone? How do you interact with the news, and social media, and do you feel like you're able to take a break from those things? Or do you have a relatively healthy relationship with your device?

A: Well it's like cocaine, man. And I learned my lesson, you've gotta make an effort to stay away from that. (Laughs.) I had to get rid of a lot of the news apps, I had to get rid of Instagram. I'm on it, but somebody runs it for me. I don't even know how to sign on as me. You have to be careful: Dopamine's got dangerous allure.

Q: When did you find yourself in a position where you had to take some of those news apps and Instagram off your phone? Where you on them too heavily, and were they affecting your sense of peace?

A: Yeah. The news will make you want to throw up every day, literally. It's just so stressful. I can't remember more stressful times than these. There's a dichotomy: It's the citizen's responsibility to stay informed and to be active. And yet, if you're dead from a heart attack caused by the stress of the situation, you can't be much of an activist. So, you have to put your oxygen mask on first before you administer to the person in the seat next to you on the plane, right? So just for survival's sake, man, I've had to cut back.

Q: What do you do in that time that you're not spending, say, doomscrolling on Instagram?

A: I try to practice the bass. That's what was really suffering, man. As it is, I'm doing three jobs at once, so I don't have a whole lot of down time. It's all music related — I'm not lifting heavy boxes in a warehouse, that's hard work — but it's a lot. So like last night, there were like four or five different things I could have done, and what I did was I put up a multitrack of a Pan-Detroit Ensemble show that we played in October, and I took my bass out and played the show. Just practiced.

Q: Were you better or worse than the show?

A: I didn't play it back, I didn't record it, so I don't know. (Laughs.) If you wanna know the truth, when I was listening to the tapes, I felt I was getting too excited on stage. On one hand, that kind of seems like it would be a good thing. But it's not. What you want to do is be in this state, like meditation. The whole point of meditating is to get yourself in a state of mind where you're just existing in the present and are open but not thinking about other stuff, and particularly not worrying either about the past or the future or judging what you do in that moment. It's the exact same thing with playing. You want to get to a place where your fingers are kind of moving independently, where you open yourself up, accept the idea that the notes come from somewhere outside of you and flow through you, and you just want to keep your receptors up. That's the most important part about practicing is getting your head in the right place, so you're not blocking the flow of ideas that are coming from outside.

Q: When you heard yourself being too excited in the performance, how did that come across audibly?

A: Too many notes, and the wrong notes. You want to play the right notes, and by that I mean I don't mean if it's a C chord, play a C. I mean, more often than not, it's an alternative note — playing the third, playing the fifth — something that gives a little emotional impact to the chord as it's going by. So the bass player has a lot of options for coloring the feel of what everybody's playing. And the choice of notes, you want to choose the right one, and don't have a bunch of superfluous ones floating. That's just amateurish. The show I listened to was from Saxapahaw, just outside of Raleigh-Durham. It was a great show, really receptive audience. A lot of Dead heads, which means there's a lot of people who are really paying attention to the music and going on the journey with you. And I just got excited with the exchange of energy.

See WAS | 8C



Columbia Pictures | Sony Pictures via AP

This image released by Sony Pictures shows Ralph Fiennes in a scene from '28 Years Later: The Bone Temple.'

MOVIE REVIEW

'28 Years Later: The Bone Temple' is a bonkers and triumphant zombie movie

By Mark Kennedy
AP Entertainment Writer

You know what zombie movies never seem to have enough of? Dancing. They've got gore and screaming and lots of guttural snarling, but no boogie. That all changes with "28 Years Later: The Bone Temple" and the dancing here is to — naturally off-kilter — 1980s heroes Duran Duran.

The fourth entry in an ever-more engrossing franchise is absolutely bonkers — and a triumph. It mixes dark, queasy disembowelment and laugh-out-loud humor in a way that both subverts the genre and leads a way out of it, too.

Nia DaCosta directs from a returning Alex Garland script and it starts right where 2025's "28 Years Later" — directed by Danny Boyle — left off. If this is your first encounter with the series, you don't necessarily need to go back to 2002's "28 Days Later" but at least to last year's entry.

Garland's script crackles with jokes about Britain's National Health Service and "Teletubbies" as it sets up an ultimate showdown between good and evil across a flower-and-meadow countryside. DaCosta is fabulous, leaning into the dark and the light with assurance, nailing the twisted tone and celebrating the weirdness.

We pick up immediately after Alfie Williams' Spike is rescued from a gang of zombies — excuse me, a gang of infected — by another gang of predators led by Sir Jimmy Crystal, whom we first met as an 8-year-old orphan in the last movie. He's all grown up and become a sadistic satanist, which happens sometimes without good adulting.

Jimmy — played by a diabolical Jack O'Connell in a tracksuit and gold chains, like a low-level Mafia lieutenant from "The Sopranos" — leads a band of young psychopaths, as deadly to both virus survivors as the snarling, semi-human infected. They don blond wigs and each is named Jimmy. There's a whiff of "A Clockwork Orange" about them — menacing, prone to ultraviolence, gleeful in destruction. "Does that sound like normal screaming, Jimmy?" one asks. Spike, bless his heart, doesn't belong here.



Columbia Pictures | Sony Pictures via AP

This image released by Sony Pictures shows Jack O'Connell, center, in a scene from '28 Years Later: The Bone Temple.'



Columbia Pictures | Sony Pictures via AP

This image released by Sony Pictures shows Ralph Fiennes, left, and Jack O'Connell in a scene from '28 Years Later: The Bone Temple.'

Sir Jimmy's opposite number is also out there, the scientist-doctor Dr. Ian Kelson, who hopes to find a cure for the virus. He's a humanist, with a huge heart and open arms, even if he does construct tall pillars out of the bleached bones of the dead. That sounds bad, but he does it to memorialize them, an in memoriam segment made out of calcium.

Kelson is played by a returning Ralph Fiennes, who is magnificent, totally committed, even going full Monty. There's no winking in anything he does, just pure soul. People are people, no matter how damaged, he believes. "There's just us," he says. Bright orange due to the iodine he paints on his skin to ward off the virus, Kelson is alone in his bone temple, which, with a few tea lights, really pulls the look together.

In perhaps a twist no one was expecting, Kelson gingerly reaches out to an infected Alpha — played by former MMA fighter Chi Lewis-Parry — who seems to enjoy being drugged by the doctor's blowgun. It turns out they both like a hit or two of morphine and looking up at the sky, all blissed out. Or dancing.

That's when Duran Duran comes in, supplying "Ordinary World," "Girls on Film" and "Rio" to a sight rare in zombie movies: Two whacked-out guys — one an eye-bulging monster who rips heads off with the spines still attached, the other a skinny Englishman who starred in "The English Patient" — swaying hand-in-hand to pop synth. (My money was on "Save a Prayer," but it's OK.)

There's plenty of good music in "28 Years Later: The Bone Temple," including Radiohead's "Everything in Its Right Place" and one of the most gloriously unhinged uses of Iron Maiden's "The Number of the Beast" ever conceived. If the previous film had a Fellini-esque vibe, this one has punky, anarchic feel.

Who will emerge victorious on this blighted island? Sir Jimmy or Dr. Kelson? And have you noticed that the hallmark of every zombie movie — the constant running away from the snarling undead — has been quietly replaced by examinations of cults and mortality, the long-term effects of trauma and what it means to be human? Call it almost post-zombie.

There's a fifth movie in this franchise in the works, with some clues that this nightmarish world may yet produce a happy ending. But they're getting better and better and, as insane as it sounds, it's going to be sad to see it go. Long may the zombies dance. Perhaps we should take advice from the great poets of our time, Duran Duran: "I will learn to survive."

"28 Years Later: The Bone Temple," a Sony Pictures release in theaters now, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong bloody violence, gore, graphic nudity, language throughout and brief drug use. Running time: 109 minutes. Three and half stars out of four.

Mellencamp

From page 1C

the type of place I was playing at the time, arenas? And he looked at me and he just said John, let me give you a bit of advice. Keep it small, but keep it going. Don't try to ride on the crest of something that happened 20 years ago. And that's how I've stayed in business all these years.

AP: So what convinced you that the time was right to go against what you've been doing for the last 20 years?

MELLENCAMP: Well, I'm not really going against it. I'm just stepping out of line for a little bit. I'll go back to theaters as soon as this is over and start doing what I always do. When I was playing in front of the big audiences, I started feeling like a cheerleader. Let's have one more round of you name the song. I just didn't feel like it was satisfying because I'm, you know, a musician. I'm not a cheerleader. And when you're playing outside and stuff, you're really playing for a party.

AP: There was a time a snotty journalist like me would probably say that this kind of tour was just some rock star taking it to the bank. But they're your songs. You're a working musician. You have the right to do whatever you want. How have your feelings evolved about this sort of thing through the years?

MELLENCAMP: Let me tell you something. You're looking at the luckiest guy in the world ... I've never given a (expletive) about money. I always wanted to get paid, but I never did do anything for money. As the little commercial that Sean and I made together, Sean just kind of said — and that was all ad lib — there's nothing wrong with it. And I agree, there is nothing wrong with me going out and playing my hit records. It will make people happy. It will probably make me happy because I haven't done it for so long. I imagine some snarky people will say Mellencamp's just doing it for the money, but I gotta tell you, I don't give a (expletive) about money.



AP File Photo

John Mellencamp performs during Farm Aid on Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023, in Noblesville, Ind.

AP: You have 19 dates for this tour. What are the chances it expands or you take it overseas?

MELLENCAMP: I'd say slim or none. I agreed to do this and I can't imagine doing any more than that. People ask me if I like touring and I go, I like the first 20 shows. And then all of a sudden it turns into something else. It turns into a job for me.

AP: Do you find that people, as we age, are not as interested in hearing new music?

MELLENCAMP: I'm very aware of it. When I'm playing in theaters, I'll play two or three new songs in a row and I can feel the audience kind of going, uh, uh. That's where you've got to be smart and go, OK, now that would be a good time to have a song that they're familiar with.

AP: From your standpoint, with some of these old hits, what are some of the songs that you think have aged the best?

MELLENCAMP: I don't know about the hits, but some of the songs that I've written, particularly as a young guy, I don't know where I got the idea to write them, because they have held up so good. A song like "Minutes to Memories." Some of these songs have held up really surprisingly well. I quit playing "Jack & Diane" for a long time. And then, a few years ago, one of the guys in the band said, let's play it and see what happens. The place went nuts. And they sang every word, which gave me a song off. All I had to do was strum the guitar. So, I kind of enjoyed that. But this time around, we're going to play "Jack & Diane" as, I don't know what they call it, a mashup. It's a soul song now.

AP: Are there any songs that make you cringe or say, I want to keep that on the shelf? Any of the old hits?

MELLENCAMP: Not yet. That's good, I guess. But that doesn't mean, you know, after 15 shows, I'm going to be going, God, I can't believe I've got to play that song again tonight. But right now I have tried to have an open mind and open heart about it. Like Sean said, there's nothing wrong with making people happy.

Was

From page 7C

Q: But you have to be open to that as well, correct?

A: Well ... (laughs). I guess that's one way of looking at it. And also, you shouldn't isolate your own performance from the whole, really. It's the same with making records. You've gotta listen to the big picture. The big picture was great, band sounded great, and it definitely got over that night. People were were with us and there was a kind of collective euphoria. So it was fine, and you could take the approach that whatever you played was fine, because it worked. I just tune into the s—y notes, and me playing them too much. (Laughs.)

Q: Listening back, does it change your idea or perception of that performance at all? Or is it kind of like looking at game tape afterwards and studying what you've done?

A: You learn, and the fun part is learning. It's the journey. If you ever think you've got it mastered and you know it all, you're over as a musician. Improving is the adventure, man. That's the fun part. I did certain things playing that show last night, I stayed lower on the bass. I wasn't running around the neck so much. I stayed lower and in the pocket, and I think that was better. So that was a takeaway from that show. It's like we've already got a guitar player, a keyboard player and some horns playing up in that higher range, so there's really no need for me to be up there, stepping on their toes, when there's all this space on the bottom. You don't hear James Jamerson going up to high A-flat on the bass. He's in his area. I've gotten very friendly with Ron Carter, Detroit native, and probably one of the all-time great not only musicians, but bass players, and we were talking about that. It was the opposite with him. He told me that McCoy Tyner used to play too much left hand and get in the way of his notes, and he went over to the piano and he pointed to where it said Steinway, and he said, "everything to the right of the S, that's your territory. Everything below it, stay out of there. That's me." So I'm gonna stay to the left of the S. (Laughs.)

Q: Have you been to Sphere yet?

A: Yeah I saw Dead & Company there. Bob (Weir) has a box there, and I sat in his box, and it was the most magnificent thing I've seen, man. You know the Donald Fagen song "I.G.Y.?" That's kind of like my life story. They promised us this future in 1957, and sometimes it looks like the opposite of what they promised. But sometimes you actually get to a place where it's everything they told you it was going to be. I experienced that in Shanghai this year, a little bit in Tokyo. It feels like the future there. But the Sphere felt the most like, "Alright, you made it to the future. You lived to 2025." Everything about it, even the architecture and the lobby, it just feels fantastic, and it's such a great way to watch a show.

Q: At a Dead & Co. show — especially given your relationship with Bob Weir — how much are you able to just be an audience member, and how much are you playing along with the show in your mind? Where is your head at when you're in the audience at that show?

A: It's in a couple of places. Having played most of those songs with Bobby, I love seeing where it goes. I love hearing when Oteil (Burbridge, Dead & Co.'s bassist) does something that I never ever would have thought of doing. And there's another thing I listen to which, you know, I introduced (John) Mayer to Bob and Mickey (Hart). And I drove up with him when he went to play with those guys for the first time. I made three albums with John, I probably spent a year-and-a-half of my life with him. And it's fascinating to hear how his playing in that band has evolved, and how it's impacted other things that he's subsequently done. So that's the other thing I'm listening to.

Q: How did you introduce John Mayer to the Grateful Dead guys?

A: Here's what happened. Mickey and Bobby came to see me at Blue Note in the Capitol (Records) tower, it was in regards to releasing some of their solo music. And I'd already made two albums with John at that point, and I knew he was like a Grateful Dead fanatic. Every time we got in his car, that's what we listened to, the Grateful Dead Sirius channel. And he was one of these guys who can say, "No, that's not May of '88, 'cuz Jerry (Garcia) is using that Phlanger that he didn't get until after the summer," or something like that. He's *that* authoritative about it. So, he happened to be in Capitol studios the day Bobby and Mickey came to see me, so I called downstairs and said, "man, you won't believe who's in the office, you've gotta come up here!" So he came up and they just all hit it off, and they said, "Well, come up and jam with us sometime." So John, to his credit, man, he shut down what he was working on. He had all his gear in Studio B at Capitol and he was writing new songs. And he went home and he studied Jerry. He woodshedded Grateful Dead songs for about three months. This was September, and they said, "We'll get together in January," or something like that. So when he went up there, he wasn't doing karaoke Jerry, the goal was to absolutely not do that. But it was to try to extract the essence and find a way he could tap into that, while still being himself. And it's been so fascinating to hear the evolution of his playing with that band, where he sounds more and more like himself, and simultaneously more and more woven into the fabric of that band. So every time I go see them, I'm listening to how John locks in and how he elevates the audience, and then I also pay attention to what Oteil plays and his choices, and I marvel at him. He's such a virtuosic bass player. So it's in thirds: a third John, a third Oteil, and then a third just being a fan and digging the scene. You never get bored. (Laughs.)

Q: If I somehow convinced you to produce my album — and I don't have any musical skills to speak of, which I should note — what would we do in the room? What is the starting process you'd take with me to get, let's say, one good song out of me?

A: I think it starts with an overall vision, you know. Like, is there something you want to say? What's going on with you, what's happening in your life, what are you thinking about now? It's much better to go with the truth than to be an actor, you give a much more convincing performance. That's what I learned from Bonnie Raitt. I saw Bonnie Raitt turn down absolute hit songs, songs that absolutely would have been top 10 hits for her, because they didn't reflect what she was going through in that moment. One time, there was a great song that Paul Brady wrote about a relationship breaking up, and she had got married a month before. She said, "Well, I can't sing this song now," and she passed on it. It would have been a hit. So, the Stanislavski Method: tap into your life, what's on your mind, and how can we express it poetically. I would start there. It's not really about, *"I want to make a record that sounds like Coldplay meets Mariah Carey,"* or something like that. So what are you going through? What do you want to talk about?

Q: I imagine on Thanksgiving you were watching the Lions, what were your thoughts on the halftime show with Jack White and Eminem?

A: It was beautiful, man. I love Jack, and I was at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame when he got inducted. I played with Elton John, we did the Brian Wilson in memoriam tribute. I just love everything he does, and I love the way he comports himself. Everyone in Detroit knows where he's coming from, everyone gets it, and yet he does it with a combination of grace and inspiration. All you've gotta do is walk in the Third Man store. Look what this motherf—— built! It's incredible. When I go in there, I think, *this is the kind of thing that everybody sits around and smokes a joint and says, "Oh man, let's open a store! All the products will be yellow and black, and we'll put a record pressing plant in the back! And everyone will wear lab coats, and it'll be a clean factory!"* And you wake up the next day and there's no way you can pull it off, but this guy consistently pulls it off. To go from outrageous idea to reality is such a long journey, and it requires such perseverance, determination and patience. I've got a ton of admiration for Jack.

Q: What about watching movies, are you a movie guy at all? Have you seen anything good lately?

A: Yeah, I've been on a Japanese noir kick the last couple of weeks. I watched one last night called "Pale Flower" (1964), which is one of the most beautiful looking films I've ever seen. Some of the Japanese noir films are kind of campy and are reflecting, you know, it's a '60s version of '40s American stuff and French noir films. But some of these things are really, really deep and profound. There's another one that I found really relevant to music that I watched two nights ago, "Branded to Kill" (1967), Seijun Suzuki's the director. It's commentary about the genre — it's all about Yakuza hitmen, basically — but it's really about the No. 3 gun for hire, and he's trying to be No. 1, and it's about the emptiness of being No. 1, basically. So it's universal. Just a brilliant film.

Q: What was the first album you owned that you picked out on your own that was yours, and what did it mean to you?

A: When I started buying records I was in fifth grade, I think, and what I bought were 45s. Albums were just like the two hit singles and then filler, so it wasn't so album-oriented. But I could tell you the first single I bought was the Four Seasons' "Marlena" with "Candy Girl" on the B-side, and I played them to death, man. I played them over and over and over again, and there was something refreshing about that. You couldn't fast forward, you couldn't skip to the next song — you had to walk across the room if you wanted to change the record. Also, you didn't have all these choices, you had to listen to what you bought. So you'd listen to it a lot. And after 30 listens, you'd hear different things, and it would mean something different to you. So I remember that, and I think my cousin, for a birthday present, got me "Blue Velvet" by Bobby Vinton. I think those were the first two singles I had.

Q: You're going back out on tour with the Pan-Detroit Ensemble. How do you feel about where you are as a band, and how do you feel about where you're heading?

A: I love it, man. I know what the next moves are, and I feel the thing evolving a really rapid rate, which is exciting. The most exciting thing is I can't wait to see what happens when we play for six weeks straight without interruption. The band is constantly evolving. It's definitely now the kind of thing where if any one of the nine people in the band can't make a gig, we just don't do the gig. You can't have subs. It's absolutely the sound of these nine individuals playing together. It's a thing, it's now a living organism.

Q: How does it compare to what you first set out to do when putting this band together?

A: I knew within the first 10 minutes that there was a musical conversation going on among these individuals that was stimulating and simpatico. There were no stragglers in this thing. Everyone listened to everybody else and played generously. And being from Detroit — everybody's from Detroit, everybody lives in Detroit, I'm the only one who's half-time with two residences — and we grew up listening to the same radio stations and playing in the same bars and playing with the same people. And there's a common musical language that we speak that was evident in the first 10 minutes. So that alone is rare, to get nine people in a room, and it felt like we've been playing together for 10 years. The only preshow agreement is that whatever we did last night, don't do it again, because no one else is going to be where they were last night. So just be fresh, and that's the fun. That's the adventure. I love being in this band, with all these players who are so accomplished and astute and open-minded. I wanna play with this band 'til I die.



20th Century Studios/HBO Max/A24 via AP

This combination of images show promotional art for the films 'Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere,' left, 'Mel Brooks: The 99-Year-Old Man!,' center, and 'The Smashing Machine.'

What to Stream: 'The Smashing Machine,' Louis Tomlinson, 'The Beauty' and Bruce Springsteen biopic

By The Associated Press



Apple/Prime/Netflix via AP

This combination of photos show promotional art for 'Drops of God,' left, 'It's Not Like That,' center, and 'Finding Her Edge.'

Dwayne Johnson transforming into MMA pioneer Mark Kerr for "The Smashing Machine" and Louis Tomlinson releasing his third solo album are some of the new television, films, music and games headed to a device near you.

Also among the streaming offerings worth your time this week, as selected by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists: Ryan Murphy's new series "The Beauty" tackles beauty standards with some horror mixed in, Jeremy Allen White plays The Boss in "Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere" and Megadeth going out with a bang with their final, self-titled album.

New movies to stream from Jan. 19-25

— Dwayne Johnson transformed into MMA pioneer Mark Kerr for "The Smashing Machine," a surprisingly gentle drama about winning, addiction and self-worth, which is set to debut on HBO Max on Friday, Jan. 23. In his review, Associated Press Film Writer Jake Coyle wrote that the potency of Johnson's performance is "let down by a movie that fails to really grapple with the violent world around Mark, resorting instead for a blander appreciation of these MMA combatants. What does resonate, though, is the portrait of a human colossus who learns to accept defeat." Filmmaker Benny Safdie won a directing prize for his efforts at the Venice Film Festival, though the awards season spotlight has shifted to his brother, Josh, who made "Marty Supreme."

— HBO Max also has Judd Apatow's "Mel Brooks: The 99-Year-Old Man!" arriving on Thursday. The two-part documentary includes interviews with Brooks himself as well as the likes of Ben Stiller, Jerry Seinfeld, Adam Sandler and Conan O'Brien.

— The Bruce Springsteen biopic "Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere" is also making its streaming debut on Hulu and Disney+ on Friday, Jan. 23. Written and directed by Scott Cooper, the film stars Jeremy Allen White as The Boss during the making of the soulful "Nebraska" album. In his review for the AP, Mark Kennedy called it "an endearing, humbling portrait of an icon," adding that it is almost a mirror of the album itself, "unexpected, complicated and very American gothic."

— A few other film festival gems are coming to more niche streamers too. The documentary "Mr. Nobody Against Putin," a 2025 Sundance selection about a Russian teacher who secretly documents his classroom's transformation into a military recruitment center during the invasion of Ukraine, is streaming on KINO Film on Thursday. And Mubi has Paolo Sorrentino's "La Grazia" starting on Friday, Jan. 23. Star Toni Servillo won the best actor prize at Venice for his turn as a fictional Italian president.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

New music to stream from Jan. 19-25

— You'd be right to call it a symphony for dissolution. Last summer, American thrash metal giants Megadeth announced they were going out with a bang. They'll soon embark on a farewell tour, but before that, they will release their final album, the self-titled "Megadeth." Pressure's on, and they're answering the call with their characteristically complex guitar work.

— Perhaps best known as a candid and cool force in the gargantuan boy band One Direction, the Englishman Louis Tomlinson will release his third solo album on Friday, the existential "How Did I Get Here?" His work usually pulls from his most direct influences, Britpop chiefly among them on 2020's "Walls" and 2022's "Faith in the Future." The "How Did I Get Here?" singles "Lemonade" and "Palaces" seem to suggest those influences are still present, but subtle now in favor of sunny, pop-rock choruses.

— The great Lucinda Williams has returned with a new one titled "World's Gone Wrong." It is, of course, uniquely Williams — at the intersection of rock, Americana, country and folk — and stacked with inspirational collaborations from Norah Jones, Brittney Spencer and more. Those, partnered with a powerful rendition of Bob Marley's "So Much Trouble In The World" with Mavis Staples, makes for a must-listen.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

New series to stream from Jan. 19-25

— FX's new series cocreated by Ryan Murphy tackles beauty standards with some horror mixed in. "The Beauty" features an all-star cast including Evan Peters, Ashton Kutcher, Rebecca Hall, Jeremy Pope, Anthony Ramos and Isabella Rossellini. Bella Hadid also guest stars. Kutcher plays a tech billionaire who has created a drug that can lead to so-called physical perfection but not without dangerous consequences. "The Beauty" is based on a comic book of the same name and premieres Wednesday on Hulu and Disney+ internationally.

— "Drops of God" also returns Wednesday to Apple TV for its second season. It's about two estranged siblings (played by Fleur Geffrier and Tomohisa Yamashita) competing to inherit their late father's estate that comes with a massive wine collection. In Season 2, they must search for the source of an unlabelled bottle of wine believed to be the best in the world.

— On the heels of the "Heated Rivalry" phenomenon, Netflix has its own love story to heat up the ice that premieres on Thursday. Where "Heated Rivalry" is based on a steamy romance book series, "Finding Her Edge" is adapted from a YA novel. It's about a figure skater training for the world championships, who finds herself in a love triangle with her current and former skating partners.

— Scott Foley and Erinn Hayes star in a new faith-based family drama called "It's Not Like That," coming to Prime Video on Sunday, January 25. Foley plays Malcolm, a pastor and father of three whose wife recently died and Hayes is Lori, a divorced mother of teenagers. Their families were always close but Malcolm and Lori find themselves relying on each other more and more as they navigate being single parents.

— Alicia Rancilio



Richard Shotwell/Invision/AP

Jeremy Allen White arrives at the 83rd Golden Globes on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif.

New video games to play from Jan. 19-25

— Flynt Buckler, the hero of Escape from Ever After, lives in a storybook world. But that fantasy goes sour when a greedy corporation invades those books, turning them into cyberpunk dystopias and Lovecraftian nightmares. Can Flynt swashbuckle his way to the top, or will he settle for a crummy office cubicle? Developer Sleepy Castle Studio says it was inspired by Nintendo's classic Paper Mario games, and the cartoonish 2D settings show off that influence. Turn the page Friday, Jan. 23, on Switch, Xbox X/S, PlayStation 5 or PC.

— MIO: Memories in Orbit is another 2D adventure rooted in a Nintendo classic — in this case, Metroid, the mother of an entire subgenre. You are a small robot in an enormous starship called the Vessel, but your AI bosses have stopped working. It's up to you to figure out what went wrong while fighting off rogue machines, and the more you explore, the more skills you gain. The ship's sprawling innards have a hand-drawn, pastel look that you might not expect in a sci-fi game. Blast off Tuesday on Switch, Xbox X/S, PlayStation 5 or PC.

— Lou Kesten

MOVIE REVIEW

In 'The Rip,' cops both good and dirty find millions in cash

By Jake Coyle
AP Film Writer

Lines between cop and criminal get murky in Joe Carnahan's "The Rip," a crime thriller set across one foggy Miami night, starring Matt Damon and Ben Affleck.

Damon and Affleck, of course, are so closely associated with Boston — most recently they produced the 2024 heist movie "The Instigators" there — that a detour to South Florida puts them, a little awkwardly, in an entirely different movie landscape. This is "Miami Vice" territory or Elmore Leonard Land, not Southie or "The Town."

In "The Rip," they play Miami narcotics officers who come upon a cartel stash house that Lt. Dane Dumars (Damon) says may have $150,000 hidden in the walls. It turns out to be more than $20 million, though, and their mission immediately turns from a Friday afternoon smash-and-grab into an imminent siege where no one can be trusted.

"The Rip," which debuts Friday on Netflix, is a lean and potent-enough neo-noir where almost all the characters are police officers, yet it's a mystery as to who's a good guy and who's not. It's a nifty and timely premise, even if "The Rip" literally tattoos its message across itself.

When Dane sits down with the young woman (Sasha Calle) at the stash house who seems plausibly innocent, she looks at tattoos on his hands and asks what they mean. On one: "AWTGG": "Are we the good guys?"

As much as the answer might seem a foregone conclusion in a movie starring Damon and Affleck, who are also producers, "The Rip" plays with and against type in ways that can keep you engrossed. (The cast also includes Teyana Taylor, Steven Yeun and Kyle Chandler.) However, the exposition is so light and hurried in "The Rip" that that's almost all it plays with. We know almost nothing about our characters outside of the action in the movie, making all the potential double crosses ring hollow.

Carnahan opens the film with a flurry of internal interrogations. The Miami police department is full of finger pointing after the fatal shooting, seen in the movie's first moments, of a detective (Lina Esco). Cutting quickly between angry accusations and equally furious defensiveness, we get the sense that nobody in the department knows who's clean and who's dirty.

"I hate it, man," Dane tells Byrne. "I hate being a cop."

Various divisions intermingle, including the DEA agent Mateo "Matty" Nix (Chandler) and FBI agent Del Byrne (Scott Adkins). The omnipresence of drug cartels and the dysfunction in the department has made the police force into a den of thieves, in its own right. When we catch up with Dane's crew, they don't look particularly official. On a Friday afternoon, they're sitting around outside drinking, with armored vehicles parked next to them. When Dane says he's got a CrimeStopper tip he wants to check out, they go in civilian cars.



Claire Folger | Netflix via AP
This image released by Netflix shows Matt Damon in a scene from 'The Rip.'

With him are four other detectives: JD Byrne (Affleck), Mike Ro (Yeun), Numa Baptiste (an underused Taylor, which, coming off "One Battle After Another," should be illegal) and Lolo Salazar (Catalina Sandino Moreno). Dane and JD, naturally, are tight. But after they find the money, the tone shifts. Dane doesn't call the money into their superiors, and instead asks his crew to turn in their phones to him. Everyone begins to wonder: What's going on? Is Dane crooked? A mysterious phone call comes in: Take $150,000 and go, or everybody dies. It's not the cartel calling.

Carnahan, who also wrote "The Rip," has said the movie is inspired by real events as described to him by a Miami detective. But little in how the movie plays out will strike many as particularly plausible. Yet Carnahan, achieving of the same dense atmosphere of his Liam Neeson wolf thriller "The Grey," albeit with a lot less snow, imbues "The Rip" with a good cop-bad cop muddiness that makes his film feel resonant.

Affleck and Damon have made more than a dozen movies together, but their collaborations seem to be increasing in frequency. They've often found often interesting ways — like in Ridley Scott's "The Last Duel" — to shape and contort expectations for themselves on screen. Usually, that's meant roles that are far from heroic, and often part of an ensemble. (Their production company, Artists Equity, operates with unusual profit participation for the cast and crew.)


Claire Folger | Netflix via AP
This image released by Netflix shows Ben Affleck in a scene from 'The Rip.'



Claire Folger | Netflix via AP
This image released by Netflix shows Teyana Taylor in a scene from 'The Rip.'

As a B-movie with a couple of A-listers, "The Rip" will probably go down as a minor and flawed genre exercise. But even in their lesser efforts, the sincerity of Damon and Affleck's buddy routine remains winning. Even in Miami.

"The Rip," a Netflix release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for violence and pervasive language. Running time: 133 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Rom-com

From page 1C

Within the confines of a sweltering hotel room, Alex and Poppy confront their long-buried feelings for one another. But will that be enough to keep them from falling apart again?

The art of the rom-com

I said before that maybe the recent string of romance book adaptations brought on by the rise of the literary-focused corner of TikTok known as BookTok would help revive the movie rom-com, a genre that has been on life support for like 20 years at this point.

I suppose I should have been more specific, though. I don't just want more rom-coms. I want *good* rom coms. But Netflix did not understand the assignment.

See, the art of the rom-com is a specific one, and unfortunately, director Brett Haley doesn't live up to the challenge. He actually seems deeply uninterested in it, which might be worse.

Despite having helmed heartfelt, character-driven films like "Hearts Beat Loud" and other literary adaptations like "All the Bright Places" in the past, Haley's direction in "People We Meet on Vacation" is truly lackluster.

There isn't much rhyme or reason to when and how the past timeline intersects with the present, and this aimlessness undercuts the tension between our two leads.

For instance, in the novel, the thermostat in Alex and Poppy's hotel room does not work. It's unbelievably hot in there, which serves to heighten the tensions in their already-strained relationship.

It's not exactly a subtle metaphor — the boiling hot hotel room represents all the unresolved feelings boiling beneath the surface of their lives.

When everything finally blows up — because it was always going to — it suddenly starts to rain. The boiling point of the story, the moment when everything they've never said comes tumbling out, the heat finally breaks. It all literally comes pouring down.

I mean, we've all seen "A Cinderella Story" and "The Notebook." This is not a new concept.

But in the film, it just randomly starts raining before Poppy and Alex have a chance to air out their grievances. There is no boiling point.

This specific example highlights a more general problem in the film: by mostly discarding the structure of the novel, the events of the film lack motivation from our characters and just sort of happen, instead of being used to build up Poppy and Alex's relationship or reveal more about who they are as people.

If you want a great example of purposeful nonlinear storytelling, I would suggest Greta Gerwig's "Little Women" or "500 Days of Summer."

Performances

As the film critic Marya E. Gates points out in her own review of the film, Haley also fails to take advantage of how emotive Blyth is as an actor, never once giving him the benefit of a close-up and instead opting for boring medium shots.

I absolutely agree with this. Blyth is perhaps one of the most expressive young actors working today, and his strength lies in his ability to listen to and respond to his scene partner. Everything you need to know about his character is written on his face and reflected in his eyes.

The same can be said for Bader, who has already proven herself as a romantic lead in Amazon Prime's short-lived fantasy series "My Lady Jane."

Writing

Although most of what happens in the film happens in the novel, the depth Henry gives to her character is completely stripped away.

In the novel, Alex losing his mom at such a young age is a driving factor in his need to be responsible and safe. The burden of taking care of his father and brother falls squarely on his shoulders.

This loss also plays into his fear of losing Poppy if anything were to happen to her.

In the film, Alex's dad and brother are there, I guess, but they don't do much, and there isn't much context for their relationship. It does little to inform us of the kind of person Alex is.

Poppy's life is similarly vague. She has one friend, Rachel (Alice Lee), whose role is substantially cut down from the novel to the point where she only appears in a single scene.

Her parents, played by Molly Shannon and Succession's Allen Ruck, receive similar treatment. They might as well not even be in the movie for how little they matter.

Rich, compelling worldbuilding is the hallmark of a good rom-com. Just take "Notting Hill" for example. That film doesn't just revolve around our leads, Julia Roberts and Hugh Grant, but features an ensemble of colorful characters and is set in a town that feels distinct and lived-in.

Unfortunately, "People We Meet on Vacation" suffers from the same lack of development as another recent book-to-movie rom-com, "The Idea of You," which I had similar complaints about.

Editing

Given how truly gutted the film feels, I have to wonder what was left on the cutting room floor. It seems like a lot of the story's meat was sacrificed for time, which the filmmakers simply don't make the most of.

The movie is so front-loaded, with filmmakers spending entirely too much time on Alex and Poppy's first meeting, that they're forced to speed run the rest of the story.

And listen, the novel is hefty. It's nearly 500 pages. I'm not expecting every single nuance to make its way into the movie.

But it's hard not to imagine what could have been when films like "When Harry Met Sally" exist, that manage to cram in a decade of friendship and character development into a one-and-a-half hour without ever once feeling rushed or cheap.

For comparison, "People We Meet on Vacation," a clear homage to "When Harry Met Sally," is nearly 2 hours long and doesn't manage to be half as charming as the Nora Ephron classic.

Conclusion

If you are a fan of Henry's novel like I was, this movie adaptation will surely be a disappointment. If you're not a book fan and you're looking for a sweet rom-com to watch, "People We Meet on Vacation" might work for you. There is surely value to be gained from watching Bader and Blyth fall in love.

I'm not usually a big believer in the blanket statement "The book was better," but in this case, it certainly was.

In Frame is a weekly arts and entertainment column focusing on everything from pop culture and new movie releases to the local arts and culture found right here in NEPA. News reporter Margaret Roarty contributes to this column.



TIMES LEADER MEDIA GROUP

CLASSIFIEDS

TimesLeader.com/Classifieds

For assistance, please call or email
Allison @ 570-704-3978 | ashubilla@timesleader.com

Legal Notices / Notices To Creditors | Commercial | Apartments /Townhouses | Autos For Sale | Autos For Sale | Trucks / SUVs / Vans

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLISH EVERY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SUNDAY

DEADLINES:
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday is at 3 pm the day before

Sunday is 2pm on Friday

Any questions Call Allison at 570-704-3978 or email ashubilla@timesleader.com

Special Notices

HERITAGE
COINS & STAMPS
10 MAIN STREET
DALLAS, PA

(AT THE ROUND ABOUT IN DALLAS)

A PROFESSIONAL DEALER FOR OVER 45 YEARS

(FORMERLY HERITAGE GALLERIES)

BUYING
US & FOREIGN

COINS
CURRENCY
SILVER DOLLARS
ALL BETTER COINS
PROOF & MINT SETS
STAMP COLLECTIONS
POSTCARDS
GOLD & SILVER COINS
JEWELRY & BULLION
TOKENS & MEDALS
INDIAN & WHEAT CENTS

Professional Appraisals

CALL IN ADVANCE
(570) 674-2646
OPEN TUESDAYS THRU SATURDAYS
10 AM TO 5 PM

Financial Services

"We can erase your bad credit 100% guaranteed". Attorneys for the Federal Trade Commission say they've never seen a legitimate credit repair operation. No one can legally remove accurate and timely information from your credit report. It's a process that starts with you and involves time and a conscious effort to pay your debts. Learn about managing credit and debt at ftc.gov/credit. A message from the Times Leader and the FTC.

Help Wanted General

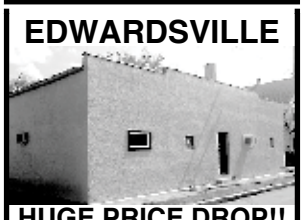
Director of Communications
Infrastructure, Community, & Economic
See link below for KSA's
www.governmentjobs.com/careers/luzernecounty
The County of Luzerne is an EEO/ADA Employer

Multiple Positions
Luzerne County
Human Services
See link below for KSA's
www.governmentjobs.com/careers/luzernecounty
The County of Luzerne is an EEO/ADA Employer

Cemetery Plots

CHAPEL LAWN
Dallas Memorial Highway
Burial plot for double burial
Garden of the Cross
Lot#54A. Asking $3,000
Save $3,000
Call 570-332-8302

EDWARDSVILLE



HUGE PRICE DROP!!
66-68 Plymouth St.
Large office building with warehouse space, overhead door, restrooms & kitchenette. Several offices. Large open floor space. Many possibilities. Located in R-1 Zone. Any buyers should do their due diligence and check with zoning for approved uses.
MLS# 25-2856 **$199,000**
James Crossin
570-650-6169
CROSSIN REAL ESTATE
570-288-0770

Houses For Sale

Having trouble paying your mortgage? Falling behind on your payments? You may get mail from people whom promise to forestall your foreclosure for a fee in advance. **Report them to the Federal Trade Commission** the nation's consumer protection agency. Call 1-877-FTC-HELP or click on ftc.gov. A message from the Times Leader and FTC.

Sell Your Home With
Jerry Busch Jr
Local Expertise.
Proven Results.



Gerald L BUSCH Real Estate Inc.
Serving the Community For Over 35 Years
Jerrybuschrealestate.com
570-288-2514
570-709-7798

Selling Your Home?
CALL A PRO!



Jim Crossin
570-650-6169
JACK CROSSIN REAL ESTATE
570-288-0770

Apartments /Townhouses

DALLAS MEADOWS APTS.
220 Lake Street
Housing for the elderly & mobility impaired; all utilities included. Federally subsidized program. Extremely low income persons encouraged to apply. Income less than $16,450. 570-675-6936
TDD 800-654-5984
8 am-4 pm, Mon-Fri.
Equal Housing Opportunity
Handicap Accessible

GLEN LYON
KEN POLLOCK APARTMENTS
41 Depot Street
Very Low, Low & Moderate Income 62 Years of Age or Older
Handicapped/Disabled Regardless of Age
Rent Based on Income & Rental Assistance Available
No Smoking
Rentals Include: Electric Range & Refrigerator, Off Street Parking, Community Room, Coin Operated Laundry, Elevator, Video Surveillance.
Applications Accepted by Appointment
570-736-6965
8:00 a.m. - 4 p.m.
TDD Only, 1-800-654-5984
Voice Only, 1-800-654-5988

WASHINGTON SQUARE APARTMENTS
Senior Citizens Housing in Downtown Wilkes-Barre
Renting 1 Bedroom Apartments.
Features:
Air Conditioning, Heat, Wall to Wall Carpeting, Reduced Cable Costs, Security & Laundry Facilities, Smoke Free Building Active Social Organization.
Rental Assistance Available.
Call for Application
570-823-0127

STUDIO APARTMENTS
Wilkes-Barre
•Elderly/Handicapped
• 62 and Older
• Utilities Included
• Stress Free Living
• Low Cable TV Cost
• $700/Month

Martin D. Popky
B'nai B'rith Apartments
570-825-8594
TTY 711

Pets

Shepherds, Labs, Goldens, Yorkies, Dachshunds, Shih Tzus and More
Hazleton 570-459-2784
Wilkes-Barre 570-762-9466

Shepherds, Labs, Goldens, Yorkies, Dachshunds, Shih Tzus and More
Hazleton 570-459-2784
Wilkes-Barre 570-762-9466

Autos For Sale

BLUES BROTHERS USED CAR SALES
2179 State Route 118
Sweet Valley
570-675-4329/570-477-2833

FORD '11 F250 SD utility box, plow,103K	**$13,900**
CHEVY '09 TAHOE LTZ 4WD, 140K	**$9,795**
DODGE '06 RAM 1500 SLT 4 door, 161K	**$7,995**
CHEVY '10 SILVERADO 1500 Work truck, 146K	**$7,995**
RAM '01 1500 SLT 2 door, 6' box, 117K	**$4,995**
DODGE '14 RAM 1500 Big Horn, 130K	**$14,400**
DODGE '10 CARAVAN 122k	**$3,995**
HYUNDAI '07 ELANTRA SE SEDAN 160K	**$2,995**
CHEVY '14 SILVERADO 1500 LT ZR1 126K	**$12,400**

Antiques & Collectibles



WYOMING VALLEY AUTO SALES
Celebrating Our 44th Year!
Over 75 Vehicles in Stock
Most Under 5,000 with Low Miles
Freshly Serviced, State Inspected & Warranted
Join Our Family of Thousands Of Satisfied Customers!
(FINANCING AVAILABLE)
Vehicle History Reports Available
Best Selection!
Best Quality!
Best Values!
View Our Inventory at www.wyomingvalleyautos.com
197 West End Road
570-825-7577

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

FORD '17 FUSION
4 door, Electric blue metallic, 1 Owner, 114k miles. Serviced & newly inspected, $8,795
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

WOW!
FORD '19 FUSION Hybrid
Excellent condition, about 45 MPG average, most options, sunroof, GPS navigation, Bluetooth, power seats & windows, heated wheel, etc. only asking $11,900.
Call Bob 570-406-0729

GENE SCATENA AUTO SALES
PLAINS, PA | 570-237-8888
MOST CARS $3,000 - $6,000 WITH WARRANTY - FINANCING AVAILABLE
1302 N. River St., Plains, PA 18702
www.CarsCheap.net

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

HONDA '09 CIVIC EX SEDAN
White, 1 Owner, 61,000 original miles.
Rare find. $7,995
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

HYUNDAI '19 SONATA
4 door, Candy apple red metallic, 1 Owner, 145k miles. Serviced & newly inspected, $8,495
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

NISSAN '14 JUKE
Silver, AWD, 147k miles, Super Clean $4,995
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

SUBARU '14 IMPREZA WAGON
Light blue silver metallic, 130k miles. Super Clean $7,895
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

TOYOTA '05 COROLLA
128k miles, silver, tinted windows. Super clean inside & out, $,5995
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

Trucks / SUVs / Vans

CHEVY '18 1500 SILVERADO LT
Crew Cab, White/black cloth, 108k miles, 5.3L engine, 4WD, factory alloy wheels, Excellent condition, No rust, original paint, great service history **Warranty $21,500.**
Maffei Auto Sales
570-288-6227
444 Market Street, Kingston
maffeiautosales.com

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

DODGE '02 RAM 3500
Extended Van. Every service record from new. Great for Lawn Care or Contractor. Was $5,995 Now $3,995
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

FORD '02 EXPEDITION



Eddie Baurer Edition
New battery, 3 row seating, new inspection, MICHELIN tires. Full maintenance records. Asking $5,300.
Call 570-287-1233

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

HONDA '08 ELEMENT
Super rare vehicle, rust free undercarriage. Like New $5,995
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

JEEP '14 WRANGLER SPORT
2 door, 94k miles, new tires & inspection.
Save Big, $10,995
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

Partner Equipment Sales
1049 S Church St, Hazleton PA
New Trucks Daily
Financing Available !
Huge Inventory Sale !!
THIS WEEK SPECIAL LISTING
1992 Ford L8000 Dump Truck, 7.8 liter diesel, Manual Trans., Box is only 3 yrs. old & no rust
Sale Price $ 21,500
Call Today 570-436-6715



CENTRAL CITY MOTORS
319 W. MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, PA 18651
570-779-3890/570-829-5596

TOYOTA '05 RAV4
4 cylinder, 160k miles. Like brand new inside & out, $5,995
It's going to be a new year & some how Randy is still here.
SAVE BIG TODAY
We are making deals

Want To Buy



We Buy Junk Cars!

We have a Scrap Yard! We Pay Cash!

LAMOREAUX SCRAP YARD
570-477-6680
2179 State Route 118
Sweet Valley, PA 18656

Auto Parts

JACK HANDLE: From Colorado, new, $10. Jack from Jeep Commander, very good, $10.
Call 570-442-4148

Antiques & Collectibles

BANK: Davey Allison Texaco Havoline 1990 Pit wagon bank, in original box, $10. Amoco toy tanker in original box, $8.
Call 570-344-7907

Clothing

COAT: Mink coat, full length, black, large, mint condition, $800. OBO. Upright walker, like new paid $650. sacrifice $350. Harvey's Lake.
Call 570-639-7202

Furnaces & Heaters

HOT WATER FURNACE PARTS: Three zone heat manifold with flow control valves , black pipe 2 inch to 3/4 inch cooper, $100 as is, or best offer. Large circulation pumps $40 each as is, Or best offer.
Call 570-655-4025.

Wanted

WANTED!
PAYING CA$H
Buying baseball, football, basketball, hockey and non-sports cards.
Single sets, boxes & cases.
Wrestling memorabilia, comic books, dealer buy outs.
Call 570-215-3556



WILKES-BARRE TIMES LEADER MEDIA GROUP

SERVICES

For assistance, please call or email

Allison @ 570-704-3978 | ashubilla@timesleader.com

Automotive

$ BUYING $
USED & JUNK CARS AND TRUCKS
570-574-1275
80965549

Awnings

STANDARD AWNING & ALUMINUM
Awnings
Aluminum - Patio Covers
Retractables
standardawning.com

HEI WINDOW TINTING & FASHIONS
Window Treatments
window film
heitint.com
570-824-3535

Auto Body Shop

Rick's Body Shop
INSURANCE ESTIMATES - COLLISION REPAIRS - FOREIGN & DOMESTIC - QUALITY CRAFTSMANSHIP
Fender Benders
P: 570-823-2211
F: 570-824-0553
Ask for RICK or NICK
Rear 105 West Saylor Avenue, Plains, PA 18702
www.RicksBodyShopPlains.com
81013041

Chimney Services



COZY HEARTH CHIMNEY
All Chimney Repairs
New Chimneys
Cleaning, Rebuilding,
Stainless Steel Lining,
Parging, Stucco, Caps, Etc.
Free Estimates
Licensed - Insured
570-840-0873

Chimney Services

CHIMNEY REPAIRS
SPRINGHILL CHIMNEY SERVICE
SAVE 10% NOW!
PA#02281
Senior Citizen Discount
Parge, Stucco, Caps
296 Main Street,
Dupont, PA
570-471-3742



Construction & Building

Levandowski Overhead Doors
SALES · SERVICE
INSTALLATION · REPAIR
· Free In Home Estimates
· Affordable Rates
· Professional, Courteous, Honest, & Dependable
· Locally Owned
27 years Experience
Fully Insured · HIC#065008
570-735-8551 or 570-606-7489

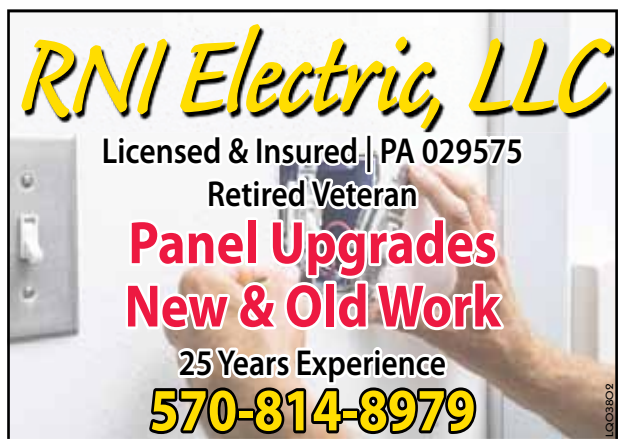


80956281

Construction & Building



Electric



Hauling & Trucking

All Kinds of Hauling & Junk Removal
We're Cheaper Than A Dumpster!
Estate Cleanout, Attics, Basements, Yards, etc. Tree Shrub Removal
All Types of Demolition
Free Estimates | 24 Hour Service
Small & Large Jobs! PA# 051929
570-239-0484

Hauling & Trucking



Heating & Cooling



Heating & Cooling



Mobile Home Parts & Service

USA SALES & SERVICE CO.
A Supermaket of Mobile Home parts
24 HR. PLUMBING/HEATING
PA/HUD certified Manufactured Housing Installers
Complete Remodeling & Repair Services
Manufactured Housing Specialist
1-800-264-7796 / 570-655-4050
570-655-3906 FAX
1827 Route 315 Highway | Pittston, PA 18640

Painting



Paving

MOUNTAIN TOP
PAVING & SEAL COATING INC.
CALL NOW TO GET ON SPRING SCHEDULE

Your one stop resource for commercial and residential paving and seal coating. Whether you need a new driveway or repairs and new markings for your parking lot, give us a call today for quality workmanship at a competitive price. Paving, asphalt paving, asphalt repairs, patchwork, and crack filling, seal coating, asphalt seal coating, preventative maintenance, and parking lot marking.

Call/Text 570-868-8375
FREE Estimates • Fully Licensed and Insured #PA013253

Roofing

Allabaugh Construction, LLC
ROOFING
SIDING &
GUTTERS
OVER 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE - LICENSED & INSURED
PROUDLY SERVING ALL OF WYOMING VALLEY
FINANCING AVAILABLE
HOMEOWNERS CALL FOR FREE ESTIMATE
570-690-7014

Roofing



Snow Plowing

SNOW PLOWING
Also selling unleaded gas $2.79 9/10
Diesel gas $3.75 9/10
Full service | Stop by & fill up
Vito & Gino's
949 Wyoming Ave.
Forty Fort, PA 18704
Parking Lots • Driveways
• Sidewalks • Salting • Snow blowing
570-574-1275

Furniture & Accessories

ELECTRIC BEDS: 2 twin extra long, on wheels. Solid head & foot boards. Electric control raises head, feet, & height of bed. Strong spring platform. Complete, clean, excellent condition. $150 each or both for $250. Call 570-288-9843

Miscellaneous

ANTIQUE SLED: very good condition, $10.
Call 570-442-4148

CLASSIFIED FREE AD POLICY

The Times Leader will advertise your used merchandise private party ad **FREE on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (3 days), maximum 8 lines. ITEMS $1,200 OR LESS**

Antiques & Collectibles, Building Materials, Clothing, Exercise Equipment, Furnaces & Heaters, Furniture & Accessories, Medical Equipment, Miscellaneous, Pools & Spas, Sporting Goods, Stereo/Electronics, etc.

Email:
classifieds@timesleader.com

Mail:
90 E. Market Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

All ad submissions must include: Name, address & telephone number

Each item must be priced Cannot exceed $1,200.

NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE
Pet ads accepted if free

PATCH CABLES: (15) short, instrument cables to connect pedals on a peddle board, $15 for all. Call 570-344-7907

STEEL TIP SHOES: with metatarsal guard, size 10-R new, paid $139. sale $40. FURNACE FILTERS: (6) 18 x 25 x 1, new, $25 for all. Harvey's Lake. Call 570-639-2926

STOKER PARTS: EFM stoker transmission & blower motor, $110. Hot water coil, $65.
Call 570-655-4025

Sporting Goods

Hornady 65mm 147 GR bullets, 1000 ras $350 or $35/100. 223 Brass for reloading, 248 pcs., make an offer.
Call 570-442-4148

ELLIPTICAL EXERCISE MACHINE: Like new, gently used $110 OBO.
Call 570-237-2411

FIGURE SKATES: Men's size 12, $10. Call 570-442-4148

SKI EQUIPMENT: Debella ski boots, size 7, $50. K2 Skis and Scott poles, 5'2", $60. Ski LEK poles, $20. K2 ski bag, $30.
Call 917-748-2586

Televisions /Accessories

TELEVISION: Roku, 45 inch television, $20.
Call 570-406-0729

Tools

TOOLS: Craftsman 2 pc red floor tool cabinet, 2 shelves, 5 drawers $250. Central Machinery 2.5hp wood thickness planer $100. Central Pneumatic Air framing nailer $30. Chicago 7in electric wet tile saw $40. Craftsman NEW 17" hedge trimmer $25.
Call 570-406-0729

Toys & Games

BUILDING COLLECTION: Liberty Falls vintage collection of bldgs, figures, scenery, etc., over 250 pieces. All new old stock in their boxes $500. MTH Lehigh Valley Hudson proto 3.0 never opened $380.
Call 570-824-3471

Want To Buy

AA ANTIQUES
We Buy Estates
Old Toys, Vintage Christmas, & Halloween, Trains, Military, Mining, Watches, Jewelry, Coins, Old Knick-Knacks. Instruments, Advertising.
Buying Anything Old.
570-954-4023

WANTED: 16MM films, color or black & white, sound or silent. Quantities are welcome. Call Phil at 570-929-1861



GET IT PRINTED!



We can supply flyers, maps, magazines, pamphlets, etc.



Contact us today for all of your printing needs

@ # dmcgee@timesleader.com or (570) 704-3955

TIMES LEADER MEDIA GROUP
118 YEARS STRONG

PRINTABLE PUZZLES

The New York Times Syndication Sales Corporation
620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018
For Information Email: syndicate-service@nytimes.com
For Release Monday, January 19, 2026

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

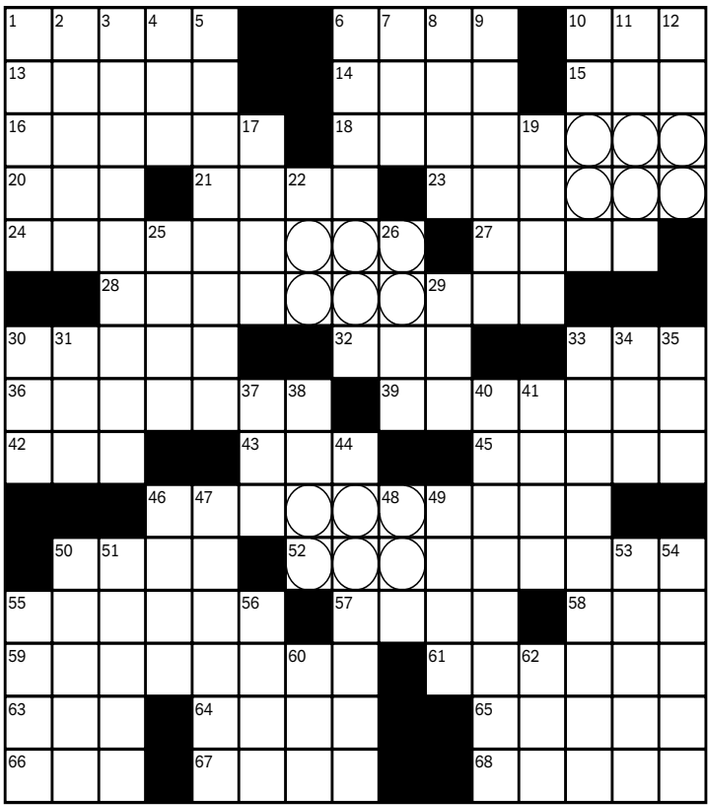
No. 1215

ACROSS

1 ___ Nicholas
6 Judge's seat, from the French
10 N.Y.C. airport
13 "Star Wars" droid, familiarly
14 Side's length squared, for a square
15 Thrilla in Manila boxer
16 Recharge one's batteries
18 Prepared to bathe
20 Cool ___ cucumber
21 "Balderdash!"
23 Filled in (for), for short
24 Schmoozed (with)
27 Good, long bath
28 Slight injury from tripping
30 Bridge support
32 Karl Marx's "___ Kapital"
33 Do one better than
36 President Hoover
39 "You take credit cards?" response
42 Unconventional
43 Alternative to the pill, in brief
45 Dog-___ (like the pages in some books)
46 Foreign-language movie that you don't have to read subtitles for
50 Location for a goatee or soul patch
52 Enchanted
55 Big-beaked tropical bird
57 One-named Brazilian soccer star
58 "If you ask me ...," to texters
59 Camp sleeping spots ... or a hint to this puzzle's circled letters
61 Sci-fi writer Isaac
63 Suitable, as a unit in a bldg.?
64 Tales of yore
65 Join in marriage
66 Lo-___ graphics
67 One-named Grammy winner from Ireland
68 ___ Cottontail

DOWN

1 Wife of Abraham, in the Bible
2 "You ___ right!"
3 "Ridiculous!"
4 "I'm kidding!!," in "Wayne's World"
5 Artist Henri de ___-Lautrec
6 One who's rotten from the start
7 Singer Grande, to fans
8 Loch ___ monster
9 Opera great Enrico
10 Sluglike "Star Wars" crime boss
11 On ___ (looking great, in slang)
12 Colonial-era pirate captain
17 Mr. ___ (Dr Pepper competitor)
19 Orchestral woodwind
22 Be on the wane
25 Crash-investigating org.
26 Turning point in W.W. II
29 When doubled, an African fly
30 But, briefly
31 Like a ripe strawberry
33 Re-election restriction
34 Many a Wordsworth poem
35 Pea holder
37 Part of a barbecue rack
38 Ernest in the Country Music Hall of Fame
40 Suddenly stops working, as an engine
41 Gov. Tim ___, 2024 running mate
44 Beyond the continental shelf, say
46 Comic actor Van Dyke
47 Lacking the capacity
48 Prez before 10-Across
49 "Deck the Halls" syllables
50 Two-door auto
51 Outings for foxhounds
53 Show feelings onstage
54 Capital of Delaware
55 Lift on the slopes
56 Like bright signs on the Las Vegas Strip
60 Funny in a subtle way
62 Suffix with Benedict or elephant



PUZZLE BY JEFF JEROME AND ANDREA CARLA MICHAELS

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 7,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords ($39.95 a year).

Read about and comment on each puzzle: nytimes.com/wordplay.

PRINTABLE PUZZLES

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

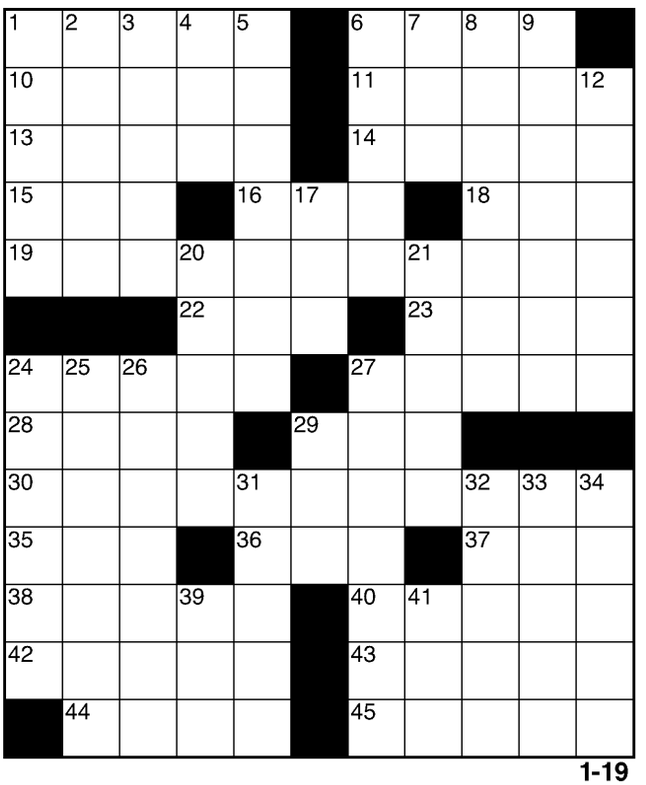
1 Pottery piece
6 Church area
10 Forbidden
11 Site of a Martin Luther King march
13 O'Connor's successor
14 Close, as a winter port
15 Homer's neighbor
16 Scepter
18 Conclude
19 1975 Gary Wright song
22 Sprinted
23 Painter Magritte
24 Like the game, to Holmes
27 Scenic outlook
28 Frosh housing
29 "Sprechen — Deutsch?"
30 1979 Cheap Trick song
35 Table part
36 Olive of cartoons
37 Beanie or beret
38 Online messages
40 Steer clear of
42 Tightly packed
43 Hint of color
44 — de plume (pen names)
45 Fills completely

DOWN

1 Get to one's feet
2 More robust
3 Tolerate
4 Turn bad
5 "Welcome" site
6 Digression
7 Chest muscle, for short
8 Shirt parts
9 Famous
12 Tenor Bocelli
17 Possess
20 Fragrance
21 Disney's mermaid
24 Mixed up
25 Jury heads
26 Pizzeria herb
27 Colorful flowers
29 Secret agent
31 Burrowing mammals
32 Defeatist's words
33 Be a sponge
34 Fencing swords
39 Belief, in brief
41 Through

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

Saturday's answer



1-19

ACROSS

1 Detail, briefly
5 Help
8 Whirl
12 Dalai —
13 Chef Garten
14 Approximately
15 Tel —
16 Title for Martin Luther King Jr.
18 Creed
20 Will subject
21 Operatic solo
23 Allen or Tebow
24 December 31
28 Recedes
31 Lawn coating
32 Santa's crew
34 Privy
35 Hose woe
37 Payment to a shareholder
39 Carrier to Amsterdam
41 Country singer McCann
42 Barber's need
45 Yearned
49 Western tip of England
51 Stoic philosopher
52 Peter Fonda role
53 Rock's Brian
54 Choice word
55 H.S. proficiency tests
56 "Little Women" sister
57 Calendar squares

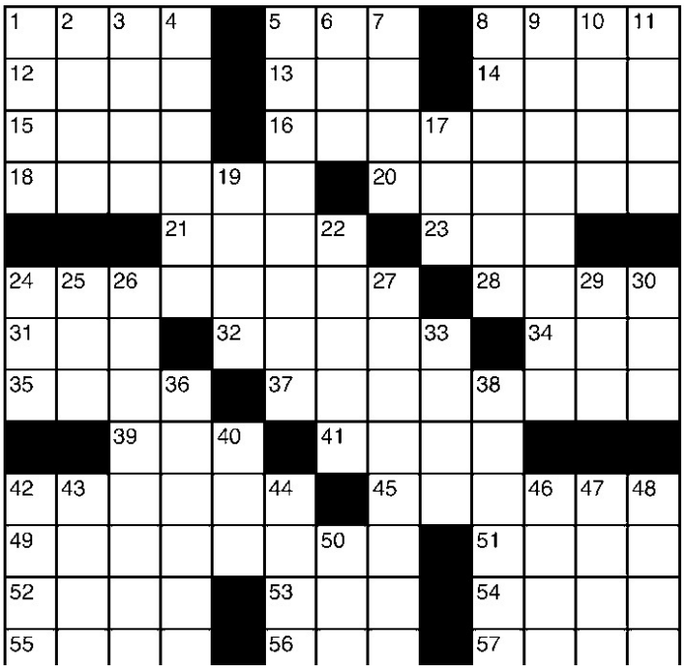
DOWN

1 Thick chunk
2 Macadamize
3 Actor Jannings
4 Pricey spread
5 Control tower locale
6 Chemical suffix
7 Jazz great Brubeck
8 Military action
9 "We the people" document
10 "— She Lovely"
11 Central point
17 Superlative suffix
19 Celtic tongue
22 Ear bone
24 NFL measures
25 Still, in verse
26 Greeted the day
27 Marine, informally
29 Rock's — Jovi
30 Lay down the lawn
33 Farm tower
36 Forest clearings
38 Practiced the tango
40 Doubtfire or Dalloway
42 Punch
43 Robust
44 Appear
46 Big bash
47 Online craft shop
48 Accomplishes
50 Away from SSW

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

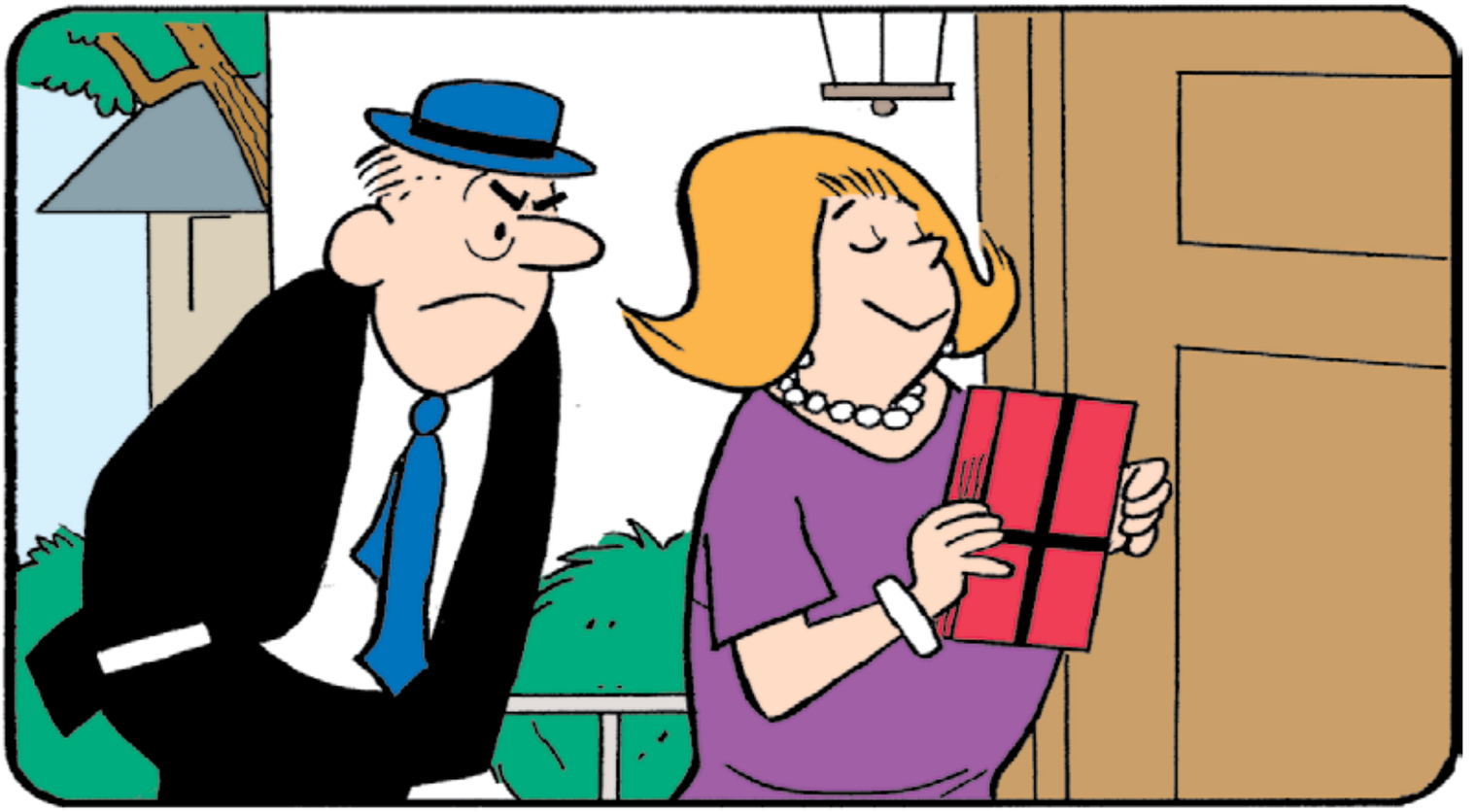
Saturday's answer 1-19



PRINTABLE PUZZLES



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Box is larger. 2. Tie is longer. 3. Bracelet is moved. 4. Roof is different. 5. Railing is shorter. 6. Finger is moved.

PRINTABLE PUZZLES

WORD SLEUTH • MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

E L J G E B Y W U R P N K I S

G D B R Z X P V S Q O M K I T

G E C A E Y W E U S F Q T P H

N L J H L T F Y A S R E T C G

A Y X E J U S T I C E V O R I

N U B N O N V I O L E N C E R

S O M M Q P N L N C D M Y D L

N A M A B A L A K I O J O A I

H F E R E C B U Z Y M X B E V

V U T C E R R Q Q P O M L L I

K I H H G S D E A T T E R O C

Saturday's unlisted clue: BOW TIE

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.
Monday's unlisted clue hint: — PEACE PRIZE

Alabama	Dream	Leader	Peace
Boycott	Equality	March	SCLC
Civil rights	Freedom	Minister	Sermon
Coretta	Justice	Nonviolence	

©2026 King Features, Inc.

1/19

King Classic Sudoku

8		3						
	6	7	9	3		1		2
2	4	9	8	5	1			
	3		5		8		7	
			1	6	9	5	4	3
		6	2					1
1	7	5		9	6		2	8
6		2	3					
				1				

Difficulty: ★

©2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

1/19

1-19 CRYPTOQUIP

REBYM RBI QM WBKKTJ CGYYX IDTI MHEOBCDYC CHMMBUBYOI YOYEFJ MQE WTSBOF CWTGG ITGS: T UDTI-OTX.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: FAMED ACTOR WITH A BAD HABIT OF MAKING MANY CREASES IN PAPER AND CLOTHES: HENRY WRINKLER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals G

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CTPHA

REETX

NIAQTU

MSPIRH



Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: DROLL MULCH CHANGE KERNEL
Answer: The FBI agents kept questioning the alleged money launderer hoping he'd — COME CLEAN

©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved.

PRINTABLE PUZZLES

FROM NORTH AMERICA SYNDICATE INC., 300 W. 57th STREET, 41st FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10019

CUSTOMER SERVICE: (800) 708-7311 EXT. 236

FOR RELEASE MONDAY, JAN. 19, 2026

CORRECTION: On question 7, the single quote before La Gioconda has been changed to a double quote.

SUPER QUIZ

Take this Super Quiz to a Ph.D. Score 1 point for each correct answer on the Freshman Level, 2 points on the Graduate Level and 3 points on the Ph.D. Level.

Subject: ART
(e.g., In what city is the Louvre? Answer: Paris.)

FRESHMAN LEVEL
1. Who painted "Irises," "Sunflowers" and "Starry Night"?
Answer_____
2. In what city is the Tate Modern art gallery?
Answer_____
3. One of his most famous works is the anti-war painting "Guernica."
Answer_____

GRADUATE LEVEL
4. The Norwegian name of this painting by Edvard Munch is "Skrik."
Answer_____
5. What is the title of Leonardo da Vinci's mural of Jesus' meal with his disciples?
Answer_____
6. Salvador Dali's "The Persistence of Memory" depicts melting _____.
Answer_____

PH.D. LEVEL
7. This portrait painting by Leonardo da Vinci is also known as "La Gioconda."
Answer_____
8. Who painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel?
Answer_____
9. Who is noted for his work of art named "Campbell's Soup Cans"?
Answer_____

ANSWERS: 1. Vincent van Gogh. 2. London. 3. Pablo Picasso. 4. "The Scream." 5. "The Last Supper." 6. Clocks. 7. "Mona Lisa." 8. Michelangelo. 9. Andy Warhol.

SCORING:
18 points — congratulations, doctor; 15 to 17 points — honors graduate; 10 to 14 points — you're plenty smart, but no grind; 4 to 9 points — you really should hit the books harder; 1 point to 3 points — enroll in remedial courses immediately; 0 points — who reads the questions to you?

Super Quiz is a registered trademark of K. Fisher Enterprises Ltd. © 2026 Ken Fisher
North America Syndicate Inc.

8	1	3	6	2	7	4	5	9
5	6	7	9	3	4	1	8	2
2	4	9	8	5	1	6	3	7
9	3	1	5	4	8	2	7	6
7	2	8	1	6	9	5	4	3
4	5	6	2	7	3	8	9	1
1	7	5	4	9	6	3	2	8
6	9	2	3	8	5	7	1	4
3	8	4	7	1	2	9	6	5

Difficulty: ★ 1/19

©2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

