SEAHAWKS DEFENSE DELIVERS SUPER BOWL WIN OVER PATRIOTS

SPORTS • SECTION B



TIMES LEADER

118 YEARS STRONG

Monday, February 9, 2026 | BREAKING NEWS AT TIMESLEADER.COM | Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania • $1.50

Council to consider additional airport allocation



Jennifer Learn-Andes
County Notebook

Two proposed Luzerne County-owned bridge projects must be further assessed because they are in the vicinity of bat populations, which means the work funded by the federal American Rescue Plan Act likely can't be finished by the end of this year as mandated, County Council's Tuesday voting meeting agenda says.

Instead, the county administration is asking the council to reprogram the total $850,000 bridge earmark to American Rescue-funded work already underway at the county-owned Wyoming Valley Airport in Forty Fort and Wyoming, the agenda said.

Council had voted at the end of 2024 to allocate $350,000 for the Patla Road Bridge in Ross Township and $500,000 for the Kisenwether Bridge in Sugarloaf Township. The county's engineering firm notified the county that the most recent Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) environmental review search identified both projects within the range of the three bat species, triggering a requirement for additional assessments.

County staff will work on identifying other funds for the bridge projects, the agenda said.

Council had collectively earmarked $7.45 million for capital improvements at the 110-acre airport, including new hangars and an aviation fuel facility, according to prior reporting.

Tuesday's voting meeting starts at 6 p.m. in the county courthouse on River Street in Wilkes-Barre. Instructions for the remote attendance option have been posted in the council's online meetings section at luzernecounty.org.

Opioid earmarks

Council is also set to vote Tuesday on four opioid litigation settlement fund awards.

The proposed earmarks:

- $570,000 to the county Drug and Alcohol to sustain and expand medication-assisted treatment and recovery support services
- $363,693 to the county District Attorney's Office to purchase portable evidence kits for law enforcement and first responders to more safely detect opioids, synthetic

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Margaret Roarty | Times Leader

Nicholas Bishop, a pizza maker at Pizza Bella in Forty Fort, stands behind the counter Sunday while taking a break from filling orders.

'Controlled chaos'

Local pizza shops fill hundreds of orders for Super Bowl Sunday

By Margaret Roarty
mroarty@timesleader.com



Margaret Roarty | Times Leader

Tommy's Pizza Corner is located at 619 Market St., Kingston.

Football's biggest game of the year meant big business for local restaurants Sunday, as employees scrambled to fill hundreds of orders that came flooding in throughout the day.

Even though Pennsylvania teams like the Philadelphia Eagles and the Pittsburgh Steelers didn't make it to the final showdown this year, plenty of football fans in the area still got together to watch Super Bowl LX, where the New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks met on the field for a historic rematch.

Nicholas Bishop, a pizza maker who "does a little bit of everything" at Pizza Bella in Forty Fort, said Super Bowl Sunday is usually one of the busiest days of the year for them.

"It's probably right behind the day before Thanksgiving," Bishop said, while taking a break from making pies. "We try to time everything out as much as possible. It's controlled chaos."

A detailed schedule of pickup times and order numbers was taped to the wall behind the counter. Nearly 150 orders had already been placed by 1 p.m.

The most popular item on the menu for game day?

"Probably a large, plain pie," Bishop said. "That's always our best seller."

Despite how hectic things were bound to get once customers came to pick up their orders, Bishop was grateful to the community for coming out to support a small business like Pizza Bella.

"We all work really hard and try to do our best for everybody," he said.

In Exeter, Sabatini's owner, Lindo Sabatini, anticipated an influx of orders around game time, but nowhere close to the amount they had last year when the Philadelphia Eagles played against the Kansas City Chiefs, winning 40 to 22.

"I'm not expecting it to be super crazy, just based on the lack of

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Everything you need to know about ICE's plan to open a detention center in area

By Gabriela Martínez
For Spotlight PA

About this story
This story was produced by the Berks County bureau of Spotlight PA, an independent, nonpartisan newsroom.

UPPER BERN — The Trump administration this week finalized the $87.4 million purchase of a warehouse in Berks County that a member of Congress says will be used as an ICE processing and detention facility.

Here's what we know so far:

What do we know about the warehouse?

The warehouse at 3501 Mountain Road has never been used, but it was initially designed and constructed as a commercial facility. The property is located in an area of Upper Bern Township that is zoned for industrial development.

Transwestern Development Company completed construction in 2021 and later sold the warehouse to PCCP, a national commercial real estate equity firm, for $57.5 million. Since it was built and placed on the market, the property has remained vacant while generating about $199,620 annually in county property taxes, $31,229 in township taxes, and $597,110 for the Hamburg Area School District.

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Many split on ICE facility in Schuykill County

By Joe Mason
28/22 News

More inside
Fetterman criticizes proposed PA ICE warehouses in letter to Noem. **Page 4A**

TREMONT TWP. — Last week's Schuylkill County Commissioners meeting confirmed an ICE detention facility will be coming to Tremont Township.

The federal government purchased the former Big Lots! warehouse for $120 million.

According to the County Commissioners, the facility will house 7,500 people for 45 to 90 days. It will also employ between 2,000 and 2,500 people they will try to source locally.

While some in the county support the detention center, others do not.

Elaine Renninger-Wansley is a Democrat. She has lived in the township for around three decades. She says she's very worried about what the detention center will do to the community.

"I am very angry, and I do not like it. I am very scared. My husband is black, and I think that they are looking for people of color," Renninger-Wansley said.

Carl Stevens is a Republican. He has lived in the township for the same amount of time and blames the past administrations for the influx of immigrants.

"You come in here illegally, like they were

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Issue 2026-040

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Margaret Roarty | Times Leader

Stacks upon stacks of pizza boxes fill the inside of Tommy's Pizza in anticipation of filling over 100 orders Sunday.

Pizza

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energy in this area for these teams," he said.

Still, Sabatini was happy to see the customers who were excited for the game this year.

"It's always nice to see people celebrating something," he said.

Down the other end of Wyoming Avenue, along Market Street in Kingston, Tommy's Pizza Corner was preparing for a long night of filling orders.

Alyssa Good, 19, who usually works the front counter, arrived at work at 8 a.m. Sunday morning to continue the prep work the restaurant started about a week before.

"The night before, we get all the wings prepped in containers in the fridge so they're ready to be fried. We start prepping blue cheese and celery the day before, too," Good said.

All hands were on deck Sunday to make sure every order was accurate and went out as smoothly as possible. Even though Good said business wasn't as crazy as last year, they still had over 100 orders in by midday.

One customer even drove an hour and a half just to get her hands on her favorite pizza and wings to enjoy while watching the game.

"It's nice to watch people come here instead of a chain restaurant," Good said. "It definitely means a lot to us."

Center

From page 1A

A marketing brochure for the Hamburg Logistics Center describes the warehouse as a "state-of-the-art logistics center" designed for large-scale distribution operations.

Why did ICE purchase the warehouse?

ICE recently purchased warehouses in Berks and Schuylkill Counties, but the agency has not publicly shared any specifics about how it plans to use them.

However, U.S. Rep. Dan Meuser, a Republican who represents part of the county, told NOTUS and Spotlight PA, "It will be a processing facility and a detention facility." He said he spoke to Trump administration officials on Tuesday.

Internal documents obtained by multiple local and national news outlets show a broad push by the Trump administration to acquire commercial warehouses as part of a plan to expand detention across the country, an effort funded by $45 billion approved by Congress through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The nearly 520,000-square-foot warehouse, previously known as the Hamburg Logistics Center, is one of 23 locations ICE plans to redevelop into a mass detention facility, according to reporting from Bloomberg. The outlet reported it could hold up to 1,500 people.

What do elected officials know?

Elected officials contacted by Spotlight PA and NOTUS for this story said they have limited knowledge of ICE's plans to purchase warehouses in the state, and that they are trying to get more information from the federal government.

Meuser said Trump officials did not answer all of his questions.

"A lot of the details we're going to get to the bottom of, as far as how many people are going to be detained there, what the capacity is, how many new employees, and all the other things that, all the details that really matter to our community," Meuser told NOTUS and Spotlight PA. "We're just going to make sure it goes as well as possible. It's a decision [the Department of Homeland Security] made, and we're, you know, we just got to work with them."

Meuser said he would have discussions with county commissioners and state representatives "to fill them in on everything" he is aware of.

Berks County's three commissioners — Republicans Christian Leinbach and Michael Rivera, and Democrat Dante Santoni Jr. — said during a Thursday meeting that they have not received confirmation from the federal government about how the warehouse will be used.

"I was not contacted by ICE," Rivera said. "We cannot stop a sale that is a private transaction of land and property ownership."

Rivera said residents should direct concerns to federal officials and ICE.

"Since ICE is a federal agency, they are the ones who have the say over what happens at the federal level," Rivera said. "We are looking into some of the things at this point. I do not have any other details."

Leinbach, who chairs the body, expressed concern about a "total lack of transparency" with the sale of the property.

"No matter what you think about ICE ... you should be very concerned about the process and how this is fundamentally changing what the plan was and what was approved literally overnight, and ask the question, 'What kind of an impact does that have, and what kind of a precedent does that set for this community?'" Leinbach said. "I'm gravely concerned about this."

State Rep. Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, a Democrat who represents part of Berks County and chairs the Legislative Latino Caucus, said the purchase "risks provoking fear, disrupting families, and endangering the well-being of our neighbors."

"Berks County has faced an ICE detention facility before, and after years of sustained community advocacy, that center ultimately closed. That history matters," said Cepeda-Freytiz, whose district is 40% Hispanic. "While many questions remain about the scope and operations of this proposed facility, I will continue to use every tool available to demand transparency, protect due process, and stand with our most vulnerable neighbors."

Can local or state governments stop it?

A spokesperson for Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro said the administration opposes the Department of Homeland Security establishing new detention facilities in Pennsylvania.

"While the state does not get advance notice of or approve these types of sales, our Administration is actively evaluating our options," the spokesperson said.

Berks County officials said they do not know at this point if the county has the power to stop the development of the ICE facility.

"I'm not going to sit here and say we have no power to stop this, because I don't know that for certain. Legal will be looking at that," Leinbach said.

County Solicitor Christine Sadler said in the meeting that she needs to confirm the use for the facility and get more information from the township about potential zoning issues.

What additional approvals are needed?

Upper Bern Township officials said they were not aware of the purchase before it happened.

"The Township was not involved in this transfer and has not received any applications from either the prior or new owners regarding the future use of the property," Andrew Hoffman, solicitor for Upper Bern Township, said in a statement.

Hoffman declined to answer questions about what the zoning and permitting processes would be for the federally owned warehouse going forward.

During Thursday's meeting, Rivera said the county has no authority over zoning or any applicable permits for the warehouse. That authority lies with municipalities, he said.

Are there already ICE detention facilities in PA?

Seven facilities in Pennsylvania detain people for ICE, according to information published by the agency.

One facility is a federal prison in Philadelphia.



Gabriela Martínez | For Spotlight PA

A warehouse in Upper Bern Township, Berks County, was purchased by ICE and the Trump administration.

Another is the Moshannon Valley Processing Center in Clearfield County, which is operated by a private contractor as part of an agreement where the local government operates as a middleman.

The other five are county jails.

How have ICE purchases unfolded?

ICE also recently purchased a 1.3-million-square-foot warehouse in Schuylkill County for $119.5 million. Commissioners there have expressed opposition to the proposed detention center. It would hold up to 7,500 people, Meuser told elected officials, according to the Republican Herald.

In a recent meeting, Schuylkill County Commissioner Larry Padora said he is concerned about the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in local tax revenue, insufficient water, sewage capacity, and security. Padora noted that the combined population of Tremont Township and Tremont Borough represents only a quarter of the capacity ICE is planning for the detention center, the Herald reported.

"Tremont sewage treatment plant, we confirmed yesterday, is not big enough to handle this, and their water system does not have the capacity to handle this," Padora said.

Susan Smith, director of planning and GIS for Schuylkill County, told Spotlight PA that the zoning ordinance does not apply to uses or structures owned and operated by a state or federal agency. Tremont Township would be responsible for the enforcement of building codes.

ICE has also purchased warehouses in Washington and Howard Counties in Maryland, where both projects have met opposition from residents and local officials.

Howard County revoked a building permit for a proposed detention facility in Elkridge. In a press conference, County Executive Calvin Ball said, "The retrofitting of private office buildings for detention use, without transparency, without public input, without clear oversight, is deeply troubling."

Avani Kalra of NOTUS contributed reporting from Washington, D.C. Spotlight PA's Kate Huangpu and Sarah Anne Hughes contributed from Harrisburg.

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County

From page 1A

doing when Biden was president, they were just storming across the border. How come when Trump got in, wham-o? You didn't have people across," Stevens said.

Renninger-Wansley says she'll protest because she believes ICE is handling the situation incorrectly.

"They're dragging people. They're shooting, and they are just not asking questions. They take before they ask the right questions," Renninger-Wansley said.

Stevens says officers should be able to do their job without issue.

"They're doing their job. It's just like other people have jobs to do. They have jobs to do. People oughta instead of protesting, let them do their job," Stevens said.

Council

From page 1A

opioids, and other emerging opioid-based drugs

• $200,000 to the county's Adult Treatment Court, largely to help cover the cost of random drug testing

• $250,000 for the Luzerne County Community College AllOne Recovery Educational Institute expansion project, which serves students in recovery from substance use disorder

Board appointments

Council is also scheduled to fill citizen seats on five county boards on Tuesday.

Some appointments were delayed last month because the council meeting ran too long. Additional vacancies will be filled at the council's next meeting on Feb. 24, said council Chairman Jimmy Sabatino.

The seats appearing on Tuesday's agenda, along with citizens on the eligibility list for possible appointment or reappointment:

• Planning Commission (one seat) — Geoffrey Baumes, Joshua Makarewicz, and David Wychock

• Redevelopment Authority (one seat) — Joseph Jones, Kelly Mulhern, James O'Brien, Mark O'Connor, Adiel Tyson, Wychock, and Rabbi Yosef Zylberberg

• Transportation Authority (two seats) — Amy Carroza, Jones, Scott Letcher, Gary Polakoski, and Joseph Zeller

• Zoning Hearing Board (one seat) — Letcher, Dave Williams, and Wychock

• Drug and Alcohol Executive Commission (one seat) — Christine Wysocky

The county invites applicants to cite multiple boards of interest, but they can only be appointed to one.

Town hall

County Manager Romilda Crocamo has scheduled a public town hall at 5 p.m. Thursday in the Exeter Borough Building.

Crocamo has been holding periodic sessions at various locations to inform residents about county projects and future plans, and to seek citizen input on needs and suggestions.

The municipal building is at 1101 Wyoming Ave.

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



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

After a week-long demolition, the former Quinn's Supermarket was razed. The view shown is from the Gramercy parking lot looking north.

Quinn's Supermarket demolished, making way for new 4-story complex

By Tony Callaio
For Times Leader

PITTSTON — After years of planning, a demolition team razed Quinn's Supermarket on the corner of Kennedy Blvd. and Market St. this past week to make way for a four-story parkade complete with retail, grocery store, and residential called Theatre Flats will be an access to the planned American Theatre.

The $15 million Theatre Flats is an integral part of City of Pittston's Mayor Michael Lombardo's plan to reshape the landscape of Downtown Pittston.

The parkade project combined with the $32 million seven-story structure at Market & Main that includes the 650-seat state-of-the-art American Theatre will be construction projects operating simultaneously.

The Market & Main and parkade projects will be a central focal point of the downtown area playing a critical role in the City of Pittston's continued growth.

Beyond expanded parking, the parkade project includes plans for retail space, a grocery store, and residential to the downtown district.

The new parking structure will directly support the forthcoming Market & Main Theater project, which is expected to begin construction soon after bids have been accepted.

"The Theatre Flats project marks the beginning of the parking structure and new retail and office space, which we hope will include a new supermarket," Lombardo said. "An additional component of the development is residential units that will connect directly to the upcoming Market & Main Theater."



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

City of Pittston Mayor Michael Lombardo was on hand with heavy equipment, beginning to take down the former Quinn's Supermarket off Kennedy Blvd. Lombardo points to the area where retail and a future grocery store will be located when the future four-story parkade will be erected.

These developments represent a major investment in Downtown Pittston's infrastructure, economic vitality, and long-term vision.

LOOK BACK

1888 powder mill explosion kills four

By Ed Lewis
elewis@timesleader.com

The explosion was so violent that windows in homes within a five-mile radius were shattered and the tremor was felt in Luzerne and Columbia counties.

Four men lost their lives, and nearly 40 others were injured when the Dupont Powder Works along Big Wapwallopen Creek, Wapwallopen, in Hollenback Township exploded on Feb. 10, 1888.

"The greater portion of our population were startled yesterday morning about 9:45 by the jar of a heavy explosion. In a few moments, messages of inquiry were traveling in every direction and it was soon learned that the scene of the explosion was the Dupont Powder Works," reported the Wilkes-Barre Record on Feb. 11, 1888.

Today, the area where the explosion occurred is known as the Powderhole, which includes a waterfall where mostly young people, despite the property being owned privately, go to cool off during hot summer days. Remnants of the stone buildings and foundations remain.

The Dupont Powder Mill began producing blasting powder for anthracite coal mines along Big Wapwallopen Creek in 1855, as the creek had a strong current, and many waterfalls were used to harness power to drive machinery.

"Along the banks of this stream for over a mile are scattered the different buildings used for the various processes of powder making. They are connected by a railway which forms a branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad," the Record reported.

On both sides of the steep mountainside were cottages where workmen slept and ate.

"The portion of the work which blew up was the packing house, where the powder is put into cans and prepared for shipment. The house at the time contained but three tons of powder, two cars loaded with several tons having just been removed by seven men who thus escaped the consequences of the disaster," reported the Record.

Those killed in the massive explosion were Peter Kishbaugh, 40, John Rossman, 38,

See EXPLOSION | 5A



AWFUL EXPLOSION.

The Wapwallopen Powder Mill Blows Up This Morning.

FOUR KILLED, FORTY INJURED.

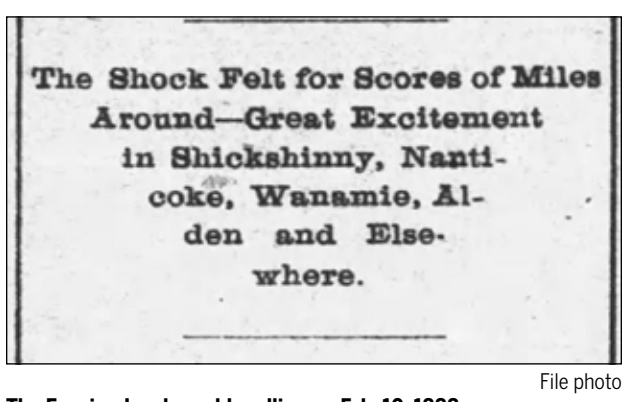
Fourteen More Reported to be in a Dying Condition.

A SCENE OF AWFUL DESTRUCTION.

Every House in the Town Shattered to Pieces.

File photo

The Evening Leader headline on Feb. 10, 1888.



The Shock Felt for Scores of Miles Around—Great Excitement in Shickshinny, Nanticoke, Wanamie, Alden and Elsewhere.

File photo

The Evening Leader subheadline on Feb. 10, 1888.



Bill O'Boyle

Beyond the Byline

On Valentine's Day and every day, all you need is love

WILKES-BARRE — The Beatles sang "All you need is love," and nothing could be truer.

We all need love, and the good thing about love is that it comes in many different ways and from many different sources.

Again, as The Beatles sang, "Love is all around."

That being said, as Valentine's Day once again approaches, I will repeat that it's not one of my favorite observations.

I am on record as stating that I sincerely believe in love — I just have never been able to find the long-term kind that I so very much admire and respect and have longed for throughout my time on earth.

And I will readily admit that I am to blame for most of my failures of the heart.

I believe I have sincerely loved and have been loved back. I'm not looking for answers or reasons or blame here. I just want to say that Valentine's Day, for most, is a wonderful day to celebrate the love of one's life and to shower them with gifts and actions that reinforce that love for one another.

I just feel that celebration should be replicated 24/7, 365 — it should be present always and allways.

That's why people who are in love and who have their life partners at their side should cherish the opportunity to celebrate and continue to do all they can to perpetuate the love they share. You are the lucky ones. You are blessed.

But for people like me, Valentine's Day is a time when I find myself thinking about my near misses in matters of the heart. There are many reasons for my less-than-successful search for a Valentine — immaturity, stupidity, the inability to appreciate, misguided priorities, immaturity — yes, that was worth mentioning twice.

All that said, there have been some good moments, albeit fewer than what could have been. And I suppose, at this stage in my life, I am living with the consequences of having sailed through a romantic sea not well navigated, facing loneliness on a daily/nightly basis, and the distinct prospect of leaving this life alone.

And that can cause severe emotional malaise.

But as I find some odd happiness in observing all those happy couples out there — people who have found their soul mates and who appreciate the goodness of all that a healthy relationship offers — I have little memories I can share of such moments.

My mom used to say there's a lid for every pot— meaning that there's someone out there for everybody. But for me, it's an unproven theory. Not that I'm a prize or anything, but maybe, just maybe, somebody exists that I could co-exist with — maybe. This person, most likely, resides halfway around the world, speaks another language, and is not waiting for me to show up.

But for now, I will wallow in my lonely world — but don't feel sorry for me. I'm OK, really. Wink, wink.

And for you lucky ones out there, well, please appreciate the mate you have.

- Be a Valentine every day.
- Send flowers on a day when they would be least expected.
- Open their car door.
- Cook their favorite meal.
- Hold hands.
- Enjoy your time together and appreciate the need to spend time apart.
- Say "I love you" and mean it.

I am not one to venture into the world of computer dating, but I have toyed with the idea of writing my pitch to that medium in the hope that "the lid to my pot" would magically stumble upon it and be impressed.

Here is what I came up with:

"Burned out former hippie freak who has survived Woodstock, The Beatles, the Sixties, disco, the Jersey shore, the Agnes Flood, and singles bars; likes quieter times with good food, great music and genuine friendships; had a cat, still has a job and an authentic compassion for human beings; not afraid to value faith and always eager to face every day with sincerity and blatant truth."

The phone should be ringing off the hook, don't you think? And I wonder why it hasn't. LOL

Truth is I actually have lived a very interesting and rewarding life and I can share many interesting stories — sometimes at the risk of not knowing when to stop talking.

But what I do know is that I now know much more than I ever knew before. I have learned over the years the intrinsic value of trust and maturity.

Time to take a ride, listen to some music, and hope that my favorite Bruce Springsteen song "Jersey Girl" comes on my radio.

"'Cause down the shore everything's alright," Springsteen sings.

So is everything in Wyoming Valley.

Especially with your Valentine at your side.

Reach Bill O'Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on Twitter @TLBillOBoyle.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Fetterman criticizes proposed ICE warehouses

By Bill O'Boyle
boboyle@timesleader.com

Following reports of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) intention to convert two recently purchased warehouse facilities into U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers, U.S. Sen. John Fetterman, D-Braddock, this week expressed his concerns in a letter to DHS Secretary Kristi Noem and requested further information.

"While I have been clear in my support for the enforcement of federal immigration law, this decision will do significant damage to these local tax bases, set back decades-long efforts to boost economic development, and place undue burdens on limited existing infrastructure in these communities," Fetterman wrote.

Fetterman said the proposed conversion of the facilities in Tremont Township in Schuylkill County and Upper Bern Township in Berks County, without input from local or state officials, includes transforming them into 7,500- and 1,500-bed detention centers, respectively.

Fetterman said both townships do not currently have the capacity to meet the demands of these detention centers, with Tremont Township officials specifically stating the proposed 7,500-bed detention facility would quadruple the existing burden on their public infrastructure system.

Detention facilities impose unique and substantial demands, particularly adequate access to existing water and sewage systems, an increased demand on local electrical grids, the capacity of local law enforcement and EMS, and proximity to appropriate medical facilities, Fetterman said.



AP file photo

Fetterman

"Additionally, the acquisition of these facilities by the federal government represents a combined loss of over $1.6 million in local tax revenue per year for Schuylkill and Berks counties," Fetterman said. "This loss of vital tax dollars compounds concerns over the ability of these municipalities to meet the infrastructure needs of these facilities and would place undue strain upon the budgets of local governments and school districts in the region."

Fetterman requested that DHS and ICE provide the following:

- A briefing for his office on the criteria used to select viable properties for conversion into ICE detention centers, including specific details on the decision to purchase the Tremont and Upper Bern Twp. Properties;
- A detailed impact assessment addressing infrastructure, public safety, public health, economic development, and fiscal concerns for these communities;
- A commitment that federal funds will cover all necessary infrastructure upgrades and ongoing costs associated with these facilities; and
- A commitment to a period of public engagement and dialogue with these communities.



File photo

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

Senate approves bill to address electric shortfall

The state Senate this week approved legislation to address the electric generation shortfall and expand energy development, according to Sen. Gene Yaw, R-Williamsport, sponsor of the measure.

Senate Bill 704 directs the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to work together to identify suitable sites for natural gas electric generation projects. The goal, Sen. Yaw said, is to address electricity generation shortages in the PJM grid and attract investment by speeding up site preparation.

"This bill is about getting projects from concept to construction faster," Yaw said. "By improving coordination between DCED and DEP, we can attract major energy investment, create family-sustaining jobs and help ensure Pennsylvania remains a national energy leader."

This legislation is part of Sen. Yaw's continued work related to responsible energy development and protecting the reliability of the PJM electric grid. Yaw, along with legislators from Pennsylvania and Ohio, convened with PJM Interconnection leadership late last year to discuss the evolving electricity market landscape.

The bill now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

FBI warns of romance scams

Ahead of Valentine's Day, FBI Philadelphia is reminding the public to be cautious of potential romance and confidence fraud scams as criminals look to con those looking for companionship.

Romance scams often begin through dating apps or on social media. Scammers create fake identities and build relationships over time, carefully gaining a victim's trust before creating opportunities or emergencies that prompt requests for money from the victim. These requests can involve wire transfers, cryptocurrency, and gift cards.

"Don't just follow your heart — trust your gut when seeking companionship online," said FBI Philadelphia Special Agent in Charge Wayne A. Jacobs. "Requests for money, cryptocurrency, or your personal information are clear warning signs of a scam, not a legitimate relationship. If you encounter any of these red flags or something doesn't feel right, end all communication immediately and report the activity to the FBI at ic3.gov."

If you develop a romantic relationship with someone you meet online:

- Think twice before you share personal information online. Scammers can use details shared on dating sites and social media platforms to better target victims.
- If you try online dating, only use dating sites with a well-known reputation. Search people's photos and profiles online to see if anyone has used the names, images, or information elsewhere.
- Take the relationship slowly and ask lots of questions.
- Beware if the person quickly asks you to leave a dating app or social media platform to go "offline" — or tries to isolate you from friends and family.
- It's a major red flag if the individual promises to meet in person, then always finds an excuse to postpone it.
- Never send money, cryptocurrency, or gift cards to anyone you've only communicated with online or by phone.

If you are the victim of a romance scam, immediately file a complaint with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

Garrity helps 'bring home the bacon'

Treasurer Stacy Garrity this week announced that more than $225,000 in unclaimed property was returned to Pennsylvanians during the 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show — putting money directly back into the hands of families, farmers, small businesses, and visitors from across the state.



Garrity

See FETTERMAN | 6A

Who owns Pa.'s digitized history?

We're a step closer to an answer

By Angela Couloumbis
For Spotlight PA

HARRISBURG — A long-simmering dispute over who owns digital copies of millions of Pennsylvania's treasured historical records landed before a state appellate court this week.

The ruling could determine whether those belong to the public or are under the control of a privately owned genealogy powerhouse.

On Wednesday, Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court heard legal arguments in the case, in which a New York City-based professional genealogist faces off with a little-known but important state agency, as well as online genealogy giant Ancestry. The latter is a private company used by millions of people to search for family and other records.

The genealogist is Alec Ferretti, a director at Reclaim the Records, a nonprofit that advocates for governments to make genealogical documents more accessible. In 2022, he submitted a public records request to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), the state's "official history agency" that is responsible for collecting, conserving, and safeguarding the commonwealth's historical records and objects.

At the time, Ferretti sought all records the state agency had provided to Ancestry as part of a 2008 agreement that, up until Ferretti's request, had attracted sparse attention. That agreement allowed Ancestry to digitize a long list of Pennsylvania historical documents belonging to the commission and make them available on its website.

According to the agreement, those documents include birth and death certificates, veterans' burial cards, records about enslaved people, and naturalization forms, as well as Civil War border claims and muster rolls. Those records would then be free to Pennsylvania residents who create user profiles with Ancestry, which requires a paid subscription to access the breadth of its records. An Ancestry lawyer on Wednesday said it has about 18 million digitized images in all.

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.

Since Ferretti is a New York state resident, he requested the information directly from PHMC. He also asked for the metadata on the digitized records, as well as any index lists that Ancestry created when performing that work.

PHMC denied the request, saying it didn't have any responsive records in its possession.



Commonwealth Media Services

Gov. Josh Shapiro joined Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission officials at the State Archives building in 2023.

Ferretti appealed, arguing that the state agency was required to obtain them from Ancestry under a section of Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law that allows public access to documents held by a private contractor hired to perform a governmental function on behalf of a government agency.

Lawyers for Ancestry soon intervened in the fight, contending the company was not carrying out a government function for PHMC. They also argued that although Ancestry had agreed to license back the digitized records to the state, its work product is proprietary.

Translation: It owns the digital records.

The case has spent nearly four years in a complicated spiral of appeals before the state's Office of Open Records, which sided with Ferretti. The matter could wind up in front of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, depending on the Commonwealth Court's decision.

During oral arguments on Wednesday, Commonwealth Court judges asked both sides pointed questions about whether the digital images constitute a public record accessible under the state's Right-to-Know Law, as certain archival materials (while public) don't fall under the law's jurisdiction. They also asked whether maintaining digitized copies of historical records amounted to a governmental function.

The judges seemed to agree on one thing: The case raised interesting dilemmas.

"We just love Right-to-Know Law, so this is great," President Judge Renée Cohn Jubelirer told lawyers when legal arguments came to a close.

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Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

The Phyllis Hopkins Duo is shown performing at The Red Mill during Celebrate Music - Pittston on Saturday, Jan. 31.

Celebrate Music – Pittston a success

By Tony Callaio
For Times Leader

PITTSTON — The City of Pittston officials are always thinking outside the box. This time, they created an event during winter to bring the community together and to give a helping hand to local pubs and restaurants during Celebrate Music – Pittston.

Downtown Pittston Partnership presented Celebrate Music – Pittston on Saturday, Jan. 31, for a musical extravaganza of over 13 hours of entertainment at 15 locations.

Local musician A.J. Jump collaborated with the City of Pittston Main Street Manager, Mary Kroptavich, to create the event, with Jump choosing the talent for the day.

The event showcased the talent of local musical acts in various locations with music ranging from acoustic, jazz, folk, and rock.

The consensus from local businesses was that Celebrate Music was a complete success, with venues filled with overflow crowds.

"Celebrate Music Pittston was an incredible success and a true celebration of community," Cara Wengen, City of Pittston Main St. coordinator, said. "Music brought everyone together, venues were packed, and our small businesses felt the love. We are so grateful to our residents and visitors—this is the definition of Pittston Proud."

Robbie Johnson, proprietor of The Red Mill, took part in Celebrate Music by hosting Phyllis Hopkins Duo.

"Our leaders in Pittston have put together a tremendous Celebrate Music event," Johnson said. "It was obvious that everyone in the community and beyond were genuinely looking forward to this is, despite the frigid temperature, it was a great turnout. So many people came out to support the musicians and our businesses. We are already looking forward to the next year."

With the outpouring of support from the community and merchants, city officials will look towards Celebrate Music – Pittston, next year.



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

The Broke Pines are shown performing at Bravo Tex Mex on Saturday, Jan. 31 for Celebrate Music - Pittston.



Tony Callaio | For Times Leader

The Joe Burke & Co. Band performed at The Joint @ Rikasa along with Rosary Guild for Celebrate Music - Pittston. Joe Burke, front center, leads his band.

Januzzi's moving locations after 20 years in Exeter



Margaret Roarty | Times Leader

Januzzi's storefront in Exeter.



Margaret Roarty | Times Leader

Januzzi's plans to move to 668 Main St. in Swoyersville, the former location of Brasi's Pizzeria and Food.

Staff Report

Januzzi's Pizza is moving to Swoyersville after 20 years serving up pies on Wyoming Avenue in Exeter.

The longtime business announced the move in a Feb. 6 Facebook post.

Januzzi's will move to 668 Main St., the former location of Brasi's Pizzeria and Food, which closed its doors in July 2025.

Januzzi's said its last day in Exeter will be Feb. 15 and expects to open in Swoyersville on March 1.

Explosion

From page 3A

George Stout, 25, and the youngest, Olean Bucky Teets, 21.

It was Teets' second day working in the packing house. Kishbaugh worked for Dupont for 22 years and left behind a wife and six children.

The Record reported windows within five miles of the packing house were shattered despite the building being located in a gorge between two mountains. Chimneys on several houses were toppled.

The Evening Leader newspaper reported the explosion was felt and heard in the Wyoming Valley.

"The Wyoming Valley was shaken Friday morning as it had never been shaken before. It was not an earthquake, as many in Wilkes-Barre believed, but a terrific explosion 21 miles down the river at Wapwallopen, on the line of the Pennsylvania railroad," the Union Leader reported on Feb. 17, 1888.

Within minutes of hearing the explosion and learning its location via telegraph, newspaper reporters were dispatched and took the 11:20 a.m. train to the Hellertown station, less than one mile from the site.

The packing house was 30 feet by 40 feet, and it disappeared due to the explosion, the Record reported.

"The town of Wapwallopen, nearly a mile away, suffered considerably, the shock breaking many windows. A stone building across the (Susquehanna) river is said to have been wrecked," reported the Record.

"The destruction in the little town was very great. Scarcely a house remained uninjured. Windows were broken in all of them, the roofs torn off in some, chimneys thrown down and in many crashed through the buildings," the Evening Leader reported on Feb. 10, 1888.

Dupont rebuilt the packing house and continued to manufacture blasting powder at the Wapwallopen Creek site until 1911, when the company relocated to Moosic.

AUDREY E. (WILLIAMS) DYMOND

Audrey E. (Williams) Dymond, 94, of Nuangola, went home with the Lord on Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026, at the Fritzingertown Senior Living Community in Drums.

Born April 7, 1931, Audrey was the daughter of the late Albert T. and Minnie (Kresge) Williams Sr. She was a wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, daughter, sister, and aunt. Some of her hobbies were knitting, crocheting, baking (she made delicious homemade biscuits), and taking care of her children and grandchildren. Audrey was a member of the Stairville United Methodist Church.

In addition to her parents, Audrey was preceded in death by her husband, Richard, in 2020; her daughter, Bonnie Padden; grandson, Brad Kline; brothers, Albert T. Williams Jr. and Nathan Williams; sisters-in-law, Alice, Dorothy, and Monica Williams; and son-in-law, Thomas Padden.

Audrey is survived by her daughter, Brenda (Dean) Kline; Dorrance and sons, Kenneth (May) Dymond, Waldorf, MD and Jody (Kelly) Dymond, Slocum; her brother, William Williams, Wilkes-Barre; grandchildren, Cayley Dymond, Dean Kline II, C J Mederios, Jody, Cody, and Jenna Dymond; great-grandchildren, Richard (Mac), Natalie, and Cole Kline; and Luke Mederios and Macie Dymond.

Per Audrey's wishes, her services will be private at the convenience of the family.

The family wishes to express thanks to Smith Health Care, where Audrey lived for the last 5 years prior to going to Fritzingertown, Hospice of the Sacred Heart, and Maylath Health Systems Inc. Hospice.

Arrangements are being taken care of by McCune Funeral Service, Mountain Top.

COMING FUNERALS

BESECKER — Harry: Services, 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Thomas P. Kearney Funeral Home Inc., 517 N. Main St., Old Forge.

BURRITT — Alice: Calling hours, 4 to 7 p.m. Monday. Funeral, 9 a.m. Tuesday, E. Blake Collins Funeral Home, 159 George Ave., Wilkes-Barre. Mass, 9:30 a.m., Ss. Peter and Paul Church.

HENSLEY — Mary: Blessing service, 10 a.m. Monday, Kevin K. Kearney Funeral Home, 125 N. Main Ave., Scranton. Visitation, 9 a.m. to service time.

LAMONICA — Jerome: Visitation, 4 to 5 p.m. Monday, Thomas P. Kearney Funeral Home Inc., 517 N. Main St., Old Forge. Blessing services, 5:30 p.m. Funeral, 10 a.m. Tuesday.

LYONS — James: Services, 2 p.m. Monday, Kniffen O'Malley Leffler Funeral & Cremation Services Inc., 465 S. Main St., Wilkes-Barre. Calling hours, 1 to 2 p.m.

MENDYGRAL — Jill: Services, 6 p.m. Wednesday, Kniffen O'Malley Leffler Funeral & Cremation Services Inc., 465 S. Main St., Wilkes-Barre. Calling hours, 4 p.m. to service time.

MORRISON — Mary: Funeral, 11 a.m. Monday, Andrew Strish Funeral Home, 11 Wilson St., Larksville. Visitation, 9:30 a.m. to service time.

NOON — Eugene: Graveside service, 1 p.m. Friday, Maple Hill Cemetery, Wilkes-Barre.

STELLA — Gregory: Funeral , 9 a.m. Monday, Corcoran Funeral Home Inc., 20 S. Main St., Plains. Mass, 9:30 a.m., Ss. Peter & Paul Church, 13 Hudson Road, Plains. Calling hours, 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, funeral home.

VENESKY — Michael: Calling hours, 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, McCune Funeral Service, Mountain Top.

WALTOS — Kathleen: Funeral, 9:30 a.m. Monday, Jendrzejewski Funeral Home, 21 N. Meade St., Wilkes-Barre. Mass, 10 a.m., Our Lady of Hope Parish, 40 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre.

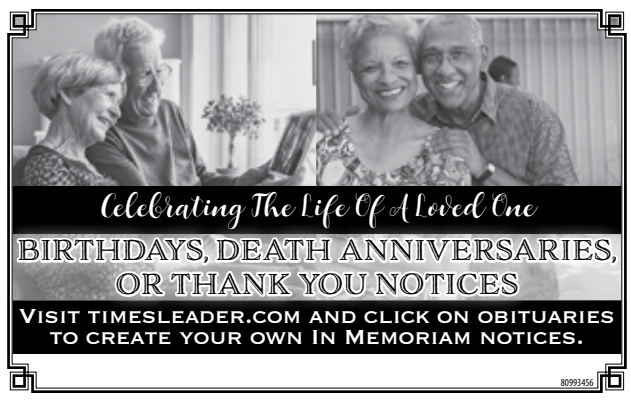
BOHENEK

Theresa (Durkalo) Bohenek, 83, of Taylor, died Friday, Feb. 6, 2026. She is survived by her husband, Walter Bohenek. A Mass of Christian burial is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday in St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Prince of Peace Parish. Family and friends may pay their respects from 10 a.m. to Mass time. Those attending the Mass are asked to go directly to church. Arrangements are under the care of Thomas P. Kearney Funeral Home, Inc., 517 N. Main St., Old Forge.

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 **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.**

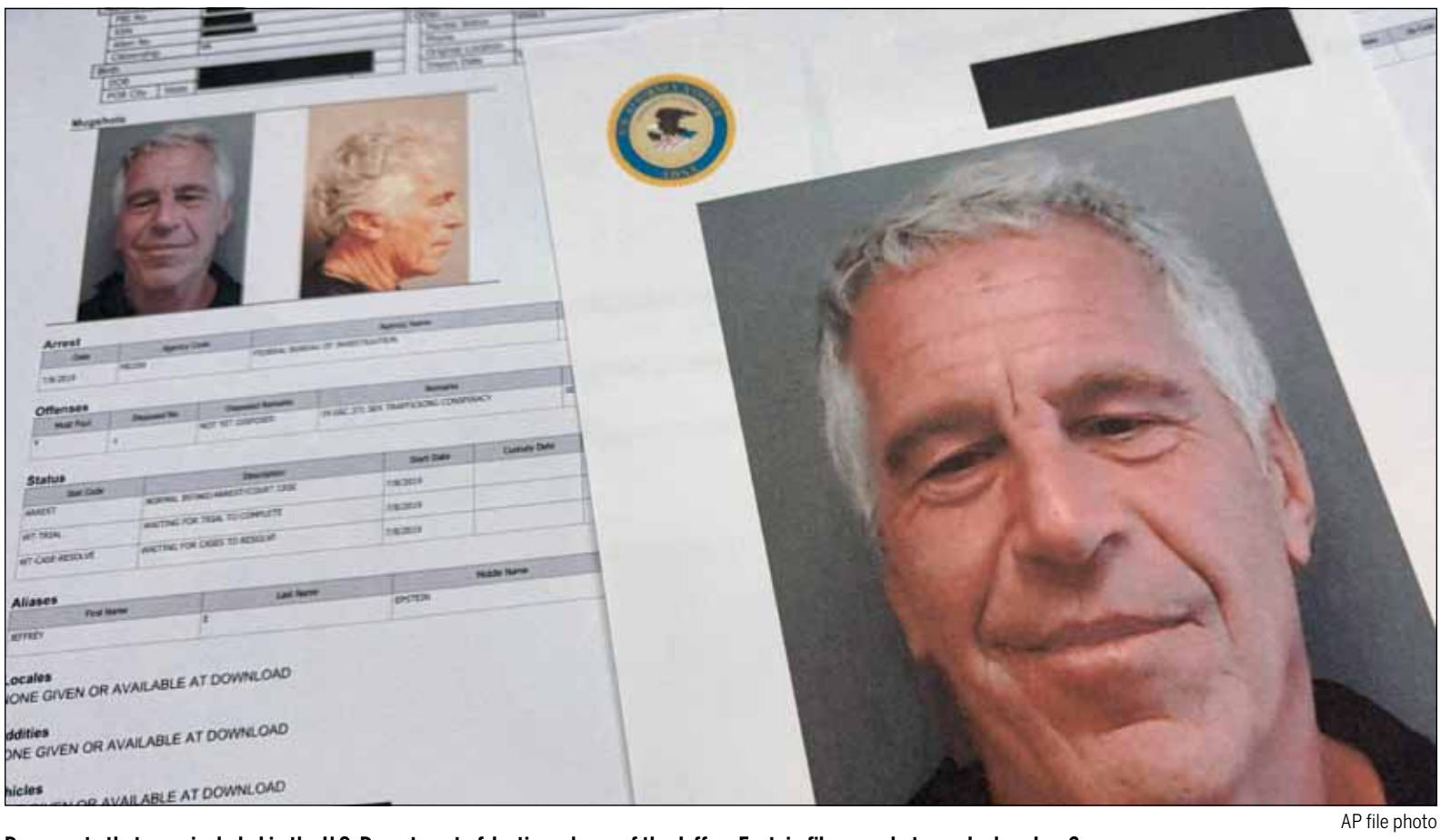
- **Deadline:** 7:30 p.m. for next day publication.



FBI: Epstein wasn't running a sex trafficking ring

Investigations will continue

By Michael R. Sisak, David B. Caruso and Larry Neumeister
The Associated Press



AP file photo

Documents that were included in the U.S. Department of Justice release of the Jeffrey Epstein files are photographed on Jan. 2.

NEW YORK — The FBI pored over Jeffrey Epstein's bank records and emails. It searched his homes. It spent years interviewing his victims and examining his connections to some of the world's most influential people.

But while investigators collected ample proof that Epstein sexually abused underage girls, they found scant evidence the well-connected financier led a sex trafficking ring serving powerful men, an Associated Press review of internal Justice Department records shows.

Videos and photos seized from Epstein's homes in New York, Florida and the Virgin Islands didn't depict victims being abused or implicate anyone else in his crimes, a prosecutor wrote in one 2025 memo.

An examination of Epstein's financial records, including payments he made to entities linked to influential figures in academia, finance and global diplomacy, found no connection to criminal activity, said another internal memo in 2019.

While one Epstein victim made highly public claims that he "lent her" to his rich friends, agents couldn't confirm that and found no other victims telling a similar story, the records said.

Summarizing the investigation in an email last July, agents said "four or five" Epstein accusers claimed other men or women had sexually abused them. But, the agents said, there "was not enough evidence to federally charge these individuals, so the cases were referred to local law enforcement."

The AP and other media organizations are still reviewing millions of pages of documents, many of them previously confidential, that the Justice Department released under the Epstein Files Transparency Act and it is possible those records contain evidence overlooked by investigators.

But the documents, which include police reports, FBI interview notes and prosecutor emails, provide the clearest picture to date of the investigation — and why U.S. authorities ultimately decided to close it without additional charges.

Dozens of victims come forward

The Epstein investigation began in 2005, when the parents of a 14-year-old girl reported she had been molested at the millionaire's home in Palm Beach, Florida.

Police would identify at least 35 girls with similar stories: Epstein was paying high school age students $200 or $300 to give him sexualized massages.

After the FBI joined the probe, federal prosecutors drafted indictments to charge Epstein and some personal assistants who had arranged the girls' visits and payments. But instead, then-Miami U.S. attorney Alexander Acosta struck a deal letting Epstein plead guilty to state charges of soliciting prostitution from an underage girl. Sentenced to 18 months in jail, Epstein was free by mid-2009.

In 2018, a series of Miami Herald stories about the plea deal prompted New York federal prosecutors to take a fresh look at the accusations.

Epstein was arrested in July 2019. One month later, he killed himself in his jail cell.

A year later, prosecutors charged Epstein's longtime confidant, Ghislaine Maxwell, saying she'd recruited several of his victims and sometimes joined the sexual abuse. Convicted in 2021, Maxwell is serving a 20-year prison term.

Evidence does not back most sensational claims

Prosecution memos, case summaries and other documents made public in the department's latest release of Epstein-related records show that FBI agents and federal prosecutors diligently pursued potential coconspirators. Even seemingly outlandish and incomprehensible claims, called in to tip lines, were examined.

Some allegations couldn't be verified, investigators wrote.

In 2011 and again in 2019, investigators interviewed Virginia Roberts Giuffre, who in lawsuits and news interviews had accused Epstein of arranging for her to have sexual encounters with numerous men, including Britain's former Prince Andrew.

Investigators said they confirmed that Giuffre had been sexually abused by Epstein. But other parts of her story were problematic.

Two other Epstein victims who Giuffre had claimed were also "lent out" to powerful men told investigators they had no such experience, prosecutors wrote in a 2019 internal memo.

"No other victim has described being expressly directed by either Maxwell or Epstein to engage in sexual activity with other men," the memo said.

Giuffre acknowledged writing a partly fictionalized memoir of her time with Epstein containing descriptions of things that didn't take place. She had also offered shifting accounts in interviews with investigators, they wrote, and had "engaged in a continuous stream of public interviews about her allegations, many of which have included sensationalized if not demonstrably inaccurate characterizations of her experiences." Those inaccuracies included false accounts of her interactions with the FBI, they said.

Still, U.S. prosecutors attempted to arrange an interview with Andrew, now known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. He refused to make himself available. Giuffre settled a lawsuit with Mountbatten-Windsor in which she had accused him of sexual misconduct.

In a memoir published after she killed herself last year, Giuffre wrote that prosecutors told her they didn't include her in the case against Maxwell because they didn't want her allegations to distract the jury. She insisted her accounts of being trafficked to elite men were true.

Prosecutors say photos, videos don't implicate others

Investigators seized a multitude of videos and photos from Epstein's electronic devices and homes in New York, Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands. They found CDs, hard copy photographs and at least one videotape containing nude images of females, some of whom seemed as if they might be minors. One device contained 15 to 20 images depicting commercial child sex abuse material — pictures investigators said Epstein obtained on the internet.

No videos or photos showed Epstein victims being sexually abused, none showed any males with any of the nude females, and none contained evidence implicating anyone other than Epstein and Maxwell, then-Assistant U.S. Attorney Maurene Comey wrote in an email for FBI officials last year.

Had they existed, the government "would have pursued any leads they generated," Comey wrote. "We did not, however, locate any such videos."

Investigators who scoured Epstein's bank records found payments to more than 25 women who appeared to be models — but no evidence that he was engaged in prostituting women to other men, prosecutors wrote.

Epstein's close associates go uncharged

In 2019, prosecutors weighed the possibility of charging one of Epstein's longtime assistants but decided against it.

Prosecutors concluded that while the assistant was involved in helping Epstein pay girls for sex and may have been aware that some were underage, she herself was a victim of his sexual abuse and manipulation.

Investigators examined Epstein's relationship with the French modeling agent Jean-Luc Brunel, who once was involved in an agency with Epstein in the U.S., and who was accused in a separate case of sexually assaulting women in Europe. Brunel killed himself in jail while awaiting trial on a rape charge in France.

Prosecutors also weighed whether to charge one of Epstein's girlfriends who had participated in sexual acts with some of his victims. Investigators interviewed the girlfriend, who was 18 to 20 years old at the time, "but it was determined there was not enough evidence," according to a summary given to FBI Director Kash Patel last July.

Days before Epstein's July 2019 arrest, the FBI strategized about sending agents to serve grand jury subpoenas on people close to Epstein, including his pilots and longtime business client, retail mogul Les Wexner.

Wexner's lawyers told investigators that neither he nor his wife had knowledge of Epstein's sexual misconduct. Epstein had managed Wexner's finances, but the couple's lawyers said they cut him off in 2007 after learning he'd stolen from them.

"There is limited evidence regarding his involvement," an FBI agent wrote of Wexner in an Aug. 16, 2019, email.

In a statement to the AP, a legal representative for Wexner said prosecutors had informed him that he was "neither a coconspirator nor target in any respect," and that Wexner had cooperated with investigators.

Prosecutors also examined accounts from women who said they'd given massages at Epstein's home to guests who'd tried to make the encounters sexual. One woman accused private equity investor Leon Black of initiating sexual contact during a massage in 2011 or 2012, causing her to flee the room.

The Manhattan district attorney's office subsequently investigated, but no charges were filed.

Black's lawyer, Susan Estrich, said he had paid Epstein for estate planning and tax advice. She said in a statement that Black didn't engage in misconduct and had no awareness of Epstein's criminal activities. Lawsuits by two women who accused Black of sexual misconduct were dismissed or withdrawn. One is pending.

No client list

Attorney General Pam Bondi told Fox News in February 2025 that Epstein's never-before-seen "client list" was "sitting on my desk right now." A few months later, she claimed the FBI was reviewing "tens of thousands of videos" of Epstein "with children or child porn."

But FBI agents wrote superiors saying the client list didn't exist.

On Dec. 30, 2024, about three weeks before President Joe Biden left office, then-FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate reached out through subordinates to ask "whether our investigation to date indicates the 'client list,' often referred to in the media, does or does not exist," according to an email summarizing his query.

A day later, an FBI official replied that the case agent had confirmed no client list existed.

On Feb. 19, 2025, two days before Bondi's Fox News appearance, an FBI supervisory special agent wrote: "While media coverage of the Jeffrey Epstein case references a 'client list,' investigators did not locate such a list during the course of the investigation."

The AP is reviewing the documents released by the Justice Department in collaboration with journalists from CBS, NBC, MS NOW and CNBC. Journalists from each newsroom are working together to examine the files and share information about what is in them. Each outlet is responsible for its own independent news coverage of the documents.

Fetterman

From page 4A

"The Farm Show gave us a unique chance to meet so many incredible farmers and families who help put food on the table for people across the state — and the country," Garrity said. "While folks were enjoying the very best of Pennsylvania agriculture, our team was hard at work helping them find money they didn't realize was missing."

Of the property returned at the Farm Show, $12,110 was returned to the Pennsylvania Livestock Association.

"This money will be put to good use to enhance our youth programs and encourage more young Pennsylvanians to learn the ins and outs of the livestock industry and support our future agriculture leaders," said Mike Firestine, PLA Director and Chairman of the Youth Committee. "The PA Livestock Association is grateful for Treasurer Garrity and her team for their efforts to return this money to our organization."

Treasury staff assisted Farm Show attendees and vendors throughout the event, helping them search for unclaimed property such as uncashed checks, dormant bank accounts, insurance proceeds, and other forgotten financial assets.

"It didn't matter if someone was selling food, showing livestock, or visiting with family; every claim returned meant real dollars going back to Pennsylvanians," Garrity said.

Treasury currently safeguards more than $5 billion in unclaimed property, which is owed to more than 1-in-10 Pennsylvanians. The average claim is over $1,000.

Treasurer Garrity encourages all Pennsylvanians to check for unclaimed property at patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property.

Reach Bill O'Boyle at 570-991-6118 or on X @TLBillOBoyle.

TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL 570-829-5000

THEIR VIEW

Vigilance, not paranoia, needed in face of biological threats

Baltimore Sun Editorial Board
The Baltimore Sun

The reported discovery of an illegal laboratory in Las Vegas should not trigger panic, but it should trigger seriousness. It is not evidence of an active biological war underway in the United States. It is something more subtle and more troubling: a reminder of how exposed modern societies have become in an age where powerful biological tools are widely accessible and increasingly easy to conceal.

Federal and local authorities are investigating the apparent lab, located in a Las Vegas home, and report that they uncovered "evidence of possible biological material to include refrigerators with vials containing unknown liquids." Two people became "deathly ill" after exposure to the lab, according to police documents.

The owner of the property is a Chinese citizen who's facing charges in a separate 2023 case involving a California biolab, police said, where "investigators reportedly discovered materials possibly associated with infectious diseases, including hepatitis, COVID-19, HIV, malaria and other potentially dangerous pathogens."

There's no reported indication, as conspiracy theories have floated, that these labs were part of any biological terror plot or intelligence operation. The California case charges the property owner with selling fake and unapproved medical test kits. But these discoveries of biolabs raise questions about how serious the threat of hidden biological hazards is in American communities and whether law enforcement is sufficiently vigilant.

Not long ago, dangerous biological research required vast government facilities, specialized infrastructure and visible oversight. That world is gone. Today, advanced biotechnology can operate quietly, cheaply and out of public view. Equipment once limited to state or academic institutions can now fit inside garages, warehouses or storage units.

This shift has transformed biosecurity from a niche regulatory concern into a frontline national issue. The most unsettling aspect of the case is not who allegedly operated the lab, but that an unlicensed operation could exist at all in a major American city like Las Vegas without detection. That reality points to gaps in enforcement, inspection authority and interagency coordination. If such gaps exist in one city, it is reasonable to assume they exist elsewhere.

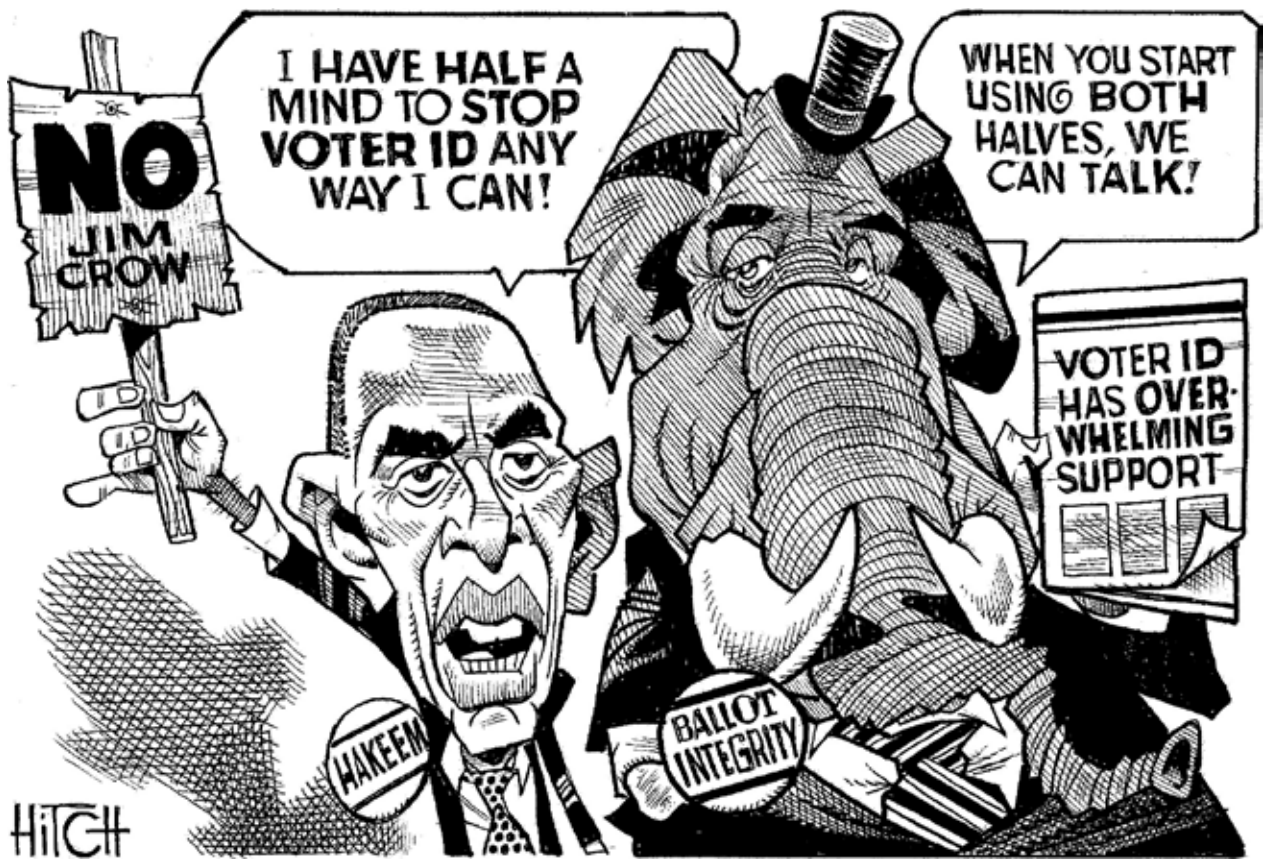
Biological threats do not require uniforms, missiles or declarations of war. They thrive on ambiguity — unknown samples, unclear intent and undocumented activity. In this realm, uncertainty itself is dangerous. Intent is often understood only after exposure or harm has already occurred. That is why clandestine biological activity, regardless of scale or sophistication, must be treated as a serious matter.

At the same time, hysteria is not the answer. Sensationalism weakens public trust and allows legitimate concerns to be dismissed as exaggeration or conspiracy. But silence and minimization are just as corrosive. When authorities fail to communicate clearly about what happened, what risks were present and how safeguards will be strengthened, speculation fills the void.

The lesson here is about preparedness, not paranoia. For decades, the federal government has been alert to the danger of biological threats to the nation. The Department of Homeland Security oversees a biological defense program responsible for identifying and responding to the introduction of threatening biological agents. This moment should prompt a sober reassessment of whether those safeguards are sufficiently effective and whether other hazardous and illicit home labs have fallen through the cracks.

The warning from Las Vegas is quiet but unmistakable: In a world where biology is portable and powerful, vigilance is no longer optional.

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THEIR VIEW

Trump's energy promise collapses as electricity bills keep rising

Steven Hill
The Fulcrum

January 20 marked the first anniversary of President Donald Trump's second inauguration. Like previous presidents, the Trump White House will be measured by how well the president has fulfilled his campaign promises. We've already seen headlines that so far the president has failed to cut our grocery bills, one of candidate Trump's earliest promises. Now, there is another campaign promise that he has missed by a wide mark.

Here's Trump in his own words: "I will cut the price of energy and electricity in half," he said at one rally in Detroit in October 2024. "Twelve months from January 20, your electric bill, including cars, air conditioning, heaters, everything, the total electric bill will be 50, 5-0 percent, less." Trump told voters at a separate event that "your energy bill within 12 months will be cut in half. That's my pledge, all over the country."

Instead, prices have continued upward. Federal data show U.S. electricity prices increased by 11% from January through September 2025, with the average household electricity bill in the U.S. 6.7% more expensive for all of 2025. This has placed additional strain on Americans' personal finances.

Since 2020, electricity prices have risen by over 30%, outpacing the general rate of inflation. So it's not just under Trump that utility prices have soared, it happened also under his predecessor, President Joe Biden. But Trump was the one who promised us the moon and left us with a grain of sand. And prices are projected to continue their upward trajectory through 2026.

Different locations hit harder than others

The utility rates have increased more in some parts of the country than others. Washington D.C. has experienced the biggest increase, a 23% jump in electricity costs, followed by Indiana with a 17% increase, and then Illinois, a 15% rise.

Not surprisingly, energy affordability has become a top concern for American families and businesses, replacing groceries as the number one household worry. A recent poll conducted by Ipsos found that 73% of U.S. residents were concerned about their electricity and gas bills rising this year, and 80% of Americans admitted they feel powerless over how much they are charged by the utility companies. No wonder some 68% of American adults describe the U.S. economy these days as "poor," while 32% say it's "good."

Trump makes it harder for poor and working class Americans

While energy bills keep climbing, more lower and middle-income Americans have been hit with a double whammy: the Trump White House has slashed federal assistance and eliminated tax credits to help needy Americans with their energy essentials. That includes killing programs for home energy efficiency upgrades, and also attempting to scrap the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that helps more than six million low-income households pay their energy bills. LIHEAP still survives (for now), but it has been significantly obstructed after the Trump administration laid off the entire LIHEAP staff. The cuts have caused unprecedented delays in getting energy assistance aid to low-income households.

Trump is also aggressively supporting the rise of the artificial intelligence industry for national security reasons in America's ongoing competition with China. But AI uses huge amounts of electricity for all the gargantuan data centers and server farms, which is having the effect of raising U.S. electricity demand for the first time in decades. Recently, PJM, the grid operator covering 13 mid-Atlantic and Midwest states as well as the District of Columbia, called data centers the "primary reason" for the increased price of power.

Does Trump deserve all the blame?

No question, Trump broke his campaign promise and has not come anywhere close to reducing utility bills by 50%. But the story gets more complex and interesting, the deeper you dig. That's because electricity prices are especially high in traditionally Democratic/Blue states.

According to the business-friendly Institute for Energy Research, 86% of states with electricity prices above the national average are blue-voting states. In contrast, 80% of the 10 states with the lowest electricity prices are reliably red GOP states. In California, for example, electricity rates are the highest in the nation among the Lower 48. The Golden State's rates are more than double the national average.

With Trump marking Year One of his second administration, many Americans are feeling frustrated and deserted by his policies. But with the next November election for picking the U.S. Congress fast approaching, will voters see the Democrats as enough of an alternative?

Steven Hill was policy director for the Center for Humane Technology, co-founder of FairVote, and political reform director at New America. You can reach him on X @StevenHill1776.

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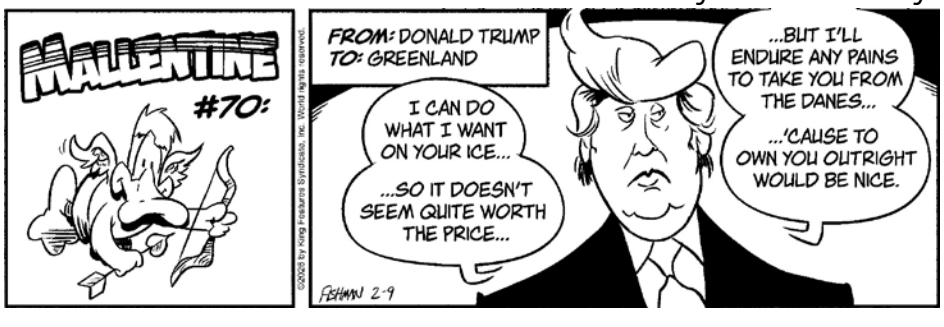
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DOONESBURY: CLASSIC '80s By Garry Trudeau



MALLARD FILLMORE By Bruce Tinsley



Voters are worried about the cost of housing

Trump wants home prices to keep climbing

By Josh Boak
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump wants to keep home prices high, bypassing calls to ramp up construction so people can afford what has been a ticket to the middle class.

Trump has instead argued for protecting existing owners who have watched the values of their homes climb. It's a position that flies in the face of what many economists, the real estate industry, local officials and apartment dwellers say is needed to fix a big chunk of America's affordability problem.

"I don't want to drive housing prices down. I want to drive housing prices up for people that own their homes, and they can be assured that's what's going to happen," Trump told his Cabinet on Jan. 29.

That approach could bolster the Republican president's standing with older voters, a group that over time has been more likely to vote in midterm elections. Those races in November will determine whether Trump's party can retain control of the House and Senate.

"You have a lot of people that have become wealthy in the last year because their house value has gone up," Trump said. "And you know, when you get the housing — when you make it too easy and too cheap to buy houses — those values come down."

But by catering to older baby boomers on housing, Trump risks alienating the younger voters who expanded his coalition in 2024 and helped him win a second term, and he could wade into a "generational war" in the midterms, said Brent Buchanan, whose polling firm Cygnal advises Republicans.

"The under-40 group is the most important right now — they are the ones who put Trump in the White House," Buchanan said. "Their desire to show up in an election or not is going to make the difference in this election. If they feel that Donald Trump is taking care of the boomers at their expense, that is going to hurt Republicans."

The logic in appealing to older voters

In the 2024 presidential election, 81% of Trump's voters were homeowners, according to AP VoteCast data. This means many of his supporters already have mortgages with low rates or own their homes outright, possibly blunting the importance of housing as an issue.

Older voters tend to show up to vote more than do younger people, said Oscar Pocasangre, a senior data analyst at liberal think tank New America who has studied the age divide in U.S. politics. "However, appealing to older voters may prove to be a misguided policy if what's needed to win is to expand the voting base," Pocasangre said.

Before the 2026 elections, voters have consistently rated affordability as a top concern, and that is especially true for younger voters with regard to housing.

Booker Lightman, 30, a software engineer in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, who identifies politically as a libertarian Republican, said the shortage of housing has been a leading problem in his state.

Lightman just closed on a home last month, and while he and his wife, Alice, were able to manage the cost, he said that the lack of construction is pushing people out of Colorado. "There's just not enough housing supply," he said.

Shay Hata, a real estate agent in the Chicago and Denver areas, said she handles about 100 to 150 transactions a year. But she sees the potential for a lot more. "We have a lack of inventory to the point where most properties, particularly in the suburbs, are getting between five and 20 offers," she said, describing what she sees in the Chicago area.

New construction could help more people afford homes because in some cases, buyers qualify for discounted mortgage rates from the builders' preferred lenders, Hata said. She called the current situation "very discouraging for buyers because they're getting priced out of the market."

But pending construction has fallen under Trump. Permits to build single-family homes have plunged 9.4% over the past 12 months in October, the most recent month available, to an annual rate of 876,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Trump's other ideas to help people buy houses

Trump has not always been against increasing housing supply.

During the 2024 campaign, Trump's team said he would create tax breaks for homebuyers, trim regulations on construction, open up federal land for housing developments and make monthly payments more manageable by cutting mortgage rates. Advisers also claimed that housing stock would open up because of Trump's push for mass deportations of people who were in the United States illegally.

As recently as October, Trump urged builders to ramp up construction. "They're sitting on 2 Million empty lots, A RECORD. I'm asking Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to get Big Homebuilders going and, by so doing, help restore the American Dream!" Trump posted on social media, referring to the government-backed lenders.

But more recently, he has been unequivocal on not wanting to pursue policies that would boost supply and lower prices.

In office, Trump has so far focused his housing policy on lobbying the Federal Reserve to cut its benchmark interest rates. He believes that would make mortgages more affordable, although critics say it could spur higher inflation. Trump announced that the two mortgage companies, which are under government conservatorship, would buy at least $200 billion in home loan securities in a bid to reduce rates.

Trump also wants Congress to ban large financial institutions from buying homes. But he has rejected suggestions for expanding rules to let buyers use 401(k) retirement accounts for down payments, telling reporters that he did not want people to take their money out of the stock market because it was doing so well.

There are signs that lawmakers in both parties see the benefits of taking steps to add houses before this year's elections. There are efforts in the Senate and House to jump-start construction through the use of incentives to change zoning restrictions, among other policies.

One of the underlying challenges on affordability is that home prices have been generally rising faster than incomes for several years.

This makes it harder to save for down payments or upgrade to a nicer home. It also means that the places where people live increasingly double as their key financial asset, one that leaves many families looking moneyed on paper even if they are struggling with monthly bills.

There is another risk for Trump. If the economy grows this year, as he has promised, that could push up demand for houses — as well as their prices — making the affordability problem more pronounced, said Edward Pinto, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a center-right think tank.

Pinto said construction of single-family homes would have to rise by 50% to 100% during the next three years for average home price gains to be flat — a sign, he said, that Trump's fears about falling home prices were probably unwarranted.

"It's very hard to crater home prices," Pinto said.



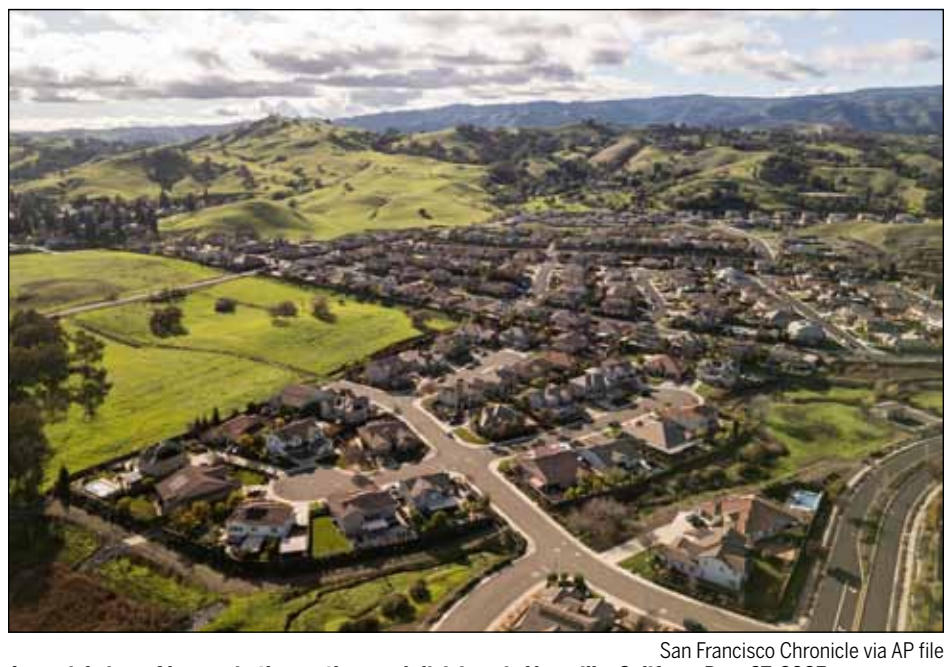
AP file photo

Construction equipment is seen near new homes July 11, 2025, in Happy Valley, Ore.



AP file photo

A 'For Sale' sign Jan. 6 in Portland, Ore.



San Francisco Chronicle via AP file

An aerial view of homes in the northern subdivisions in Vacaville, Calif., on Dec. 27, 2025.

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BOX OFFICE

‘Melania’ falls steeply, ‘Send Help’ holds at No. 1



Vertical Entertainment via AP

Christoph Waltz, background center, in a scene from ‘Dracula.’



AP Photo

A movie theater puts up a poster for the screening of a documentary about Melania Trump, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on Jan. 30.

By Jake Coyle
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Hollywood largely ceded attention to football over a slow box-office weekend, with the survival thriller “Send Help” repeating as No. 1 in ticket sales and the Melania Trump documentary “Melania” falling sharply in its second weekend.

Super Bowl weekend is typically one of the lowest attended moviegoing times of the year. It was the second slowest weekend last year and in 2024 it ranked dead last for moviegoing.

Studios instead put their focus on advertising movies for the massive television audience. Among the trailers expected to hit the NFL broadcast Sunday were The Walt Disney Co.’s “Mandalorian and Grogu,” Lionsgate’s Michael Jackson biopic, “Michael” and Universal Pictures’ “The Super Mario Galaxy Movie.”

In North American theaters, the Disney.-20th Century Studios release “Send Help,” directed by Sam Raimi, lead all films with $10 million in its second weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday. With $53.7 million globally thus far, the R-rated survival thriller has proved a solid midbudget success. Disney meanwhile watched its remarkably long-lasting “Zootopia 2” cross $1.8 billion worldwide in its 11th week of release.

“Melania,” from Amazon MGM, added 300 theaters in its second weekend but dropped steeply with to $2.4 million in ticket sales, down 67% from its much-discussed debut. The rapid downturn means the Brett Ratner-directed documentary is likely heading toward flop territory given its high price tag. Amazon MGM paid $40 million for film rights, plus some $35 million to market it.

The North American total for “Melania” stands at $13.4 million. Amazon MGM has not released international figures, though they’re expected to be paltry.

Kevin Wilson, head of domestic distribution for the studio, said the movie’s box-office performance “is a critical first moment that validates our wholistic distribution strategy, building awareness, engagement, and provides momentum ahead of the film’s eventual debut on Prime Video.”

The film’s ticket sales — which would be very good for a less expensive documentary — were a talking point throughout the week. Late-night hosts Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel hammered the movie’s sales. Kimmel called them a “rigged outcome.” Elsewhere in theaters, the Italy-set Kevin James romantic comedy “Solo Mio” debuted with a robust $7.2 million, a major win for Angel Studios, best known for its faith-based releases. “Stray Kids: The Dominate Experience,” a K-pop concert film released by Bleecker Street, launched with $5.6 million, and an additional $13.2 million overseas. The Luc Besson-directed Bram Stoker adaptation “Dracula” opened with $4.5 million, a studio-best debut for the indie distributor Vertical.

One of the most unusual releases in theaters, however, remains the low-budget indie “Iron Lung.” The YouTube filmmaker Markiplier, whose real name is Mark Fischbach, self-financed and self-distributed the R-rated video game adaptation, along with writing, directing and starring in it. In its second weekend, “Iron Lung” collected $6.2 million, bringing its two-week total to $31.2 million. It cost $3 million to make.



Invision via AP

Director Sam Raimi, from left, Rachel McAdams, Dylan O’Brien, and producer Zainab Azizi pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere for the film ‘Send Help’ in London on Jan. 29.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

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

1. “Send Help,” $10 million.
2. “Solo Mio,” $7.2 million.
3. “Iron Lung,” $6 million.
4. “Stray Kids: The Dominate Experience,” $5.6 million.
5. “Dracula,” $4.5 million.
6. “Zootopia 2,” $4 million.
7. “Avatar: Fire and Ash,” $3.5 million.
8. “The Strangers: Chapter 3,” $3.5 million.
9. “Shelter,” $2.4 million.
10. “Melania,” $2.4 million.

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Speaking up

US Olympians discussing politics at home face online backlash

By Fernanda Figueroa
The Associated Press

MILAN — U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday said that it is hard to cheer for American Olympians who are speaking out against administration policies, calling one such critic "a real Loser" who perhaps should have stayed home.

It was the latest and most prominent example of U.S. Olympians at the Milan Cortina Games inviting online backlash with their words.

Reporters on Friday asked U.S. athletes at a news conference how they feel representing the country during the Trump administration's heighted immigration enforcement actions. Freestyle skier Hunter Hess replied that he had mixed emotions since he doesn't agree with the situation, and that he is in Milan competing on behalf of everyone who

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AP file photo

Hunter Hess, of the United States, executes a trick in the halfpipe finals during the World Cup U.S. Grand Prix freestyle skiing event in Copper Mountain, Colo., on Dec. 17, 2022.

Search continues for Savannah Guthrie's mother

By Ty O'neil
The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — The urgent investigation into the apparent kidnapping of 84-year-old Nancy Guthrie continued Sunday, a week after the mother of "Today" show host Savannah Guthrie was reported missing in Arizona.

Savannah Guthrie solemnly told the potential kidnappers in a social media video released Saturday that the family was prepared to pay for her safe return. Flanked by her siblings, Guthrie said, "We received your message," and that "This is the only way we will have peace. This is very valuable to us, and we will pay."

An FBI spokesman said Savannah Guthrie was referring to a message that was sent to the Tucson-based television station KOLD on Friday. The station declined to



AP photo

Lit candles next to a sign from neighbors supporting the Guthrie family outside of Nancy Guthrie's house in the early morning hours of Sunday in Tucson, Ariz.

share details about the message's contents as the FBI conducted its review.

Detectives and agents continued to perform follow-up work at multiple locations as part of the investigation, according to an email Sunday from the Pima County Sheriff's Department. The agency said in the email to media that it would not yet provide details about that work.

"Investigators have not identified any suspects, persons of interest, or vehicles connected to this case," read the email.

Two marked sheriff's cars and another vehicle arrived at Nancy Guthrie's house around midday Sunday and at least two people went to the back of the home for more than 20 minutes

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IN SUMMARY

Reports of ICE ruses add to fears in Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS — Legal observers and officials say they have received a growing number of reports of federal agents impersonating construction workers, delivery drivers and in some cases anti-ICE activists in Minnesota. Not all of those incidents have been verified during the ongoing immigration crackdown. But they have heightened fears in a state already on edge. They add to legal groups' concerns about the Trump administration's dramatic reshaping of immigration enforcement tactics nationwide. Supporters of the immigration crackdown say the sprawling network of anti-ICE activists in Minneapolis has forced federal agents to adopt new methods of avoiding detection.

Iran sentences Nobel laureate to 7 years

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran has sentenced Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi to over seven more years in prison. Supporters say she began a hunger strike on February 2. Her lawyer confirmed the sentence, which includes charges of "gathering and collusion" and propaganda. Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi emphasized the country's strength in resisting pressure from great powers. This comes after recent nuclear negotiations with the U.S. and nationwide protests. The U.S. has moved military assets to the Middle East to pressure Iran. Talks between Iran and the U.S. are ongoing, with uncertain future rounds.

— Associated Press

Gaza's Rafah crossing opens after 2-day closure

By Samy Magdy and Melanie Lidman
The Associated Press

CAIRO — A limited number of Palestinians traveled between Gaza and Egypt on Sunday as the Rafah crossing reopened after a two-day closure, Egyptian state media reported.

The vital border point opened last week for the first time since mid-2024, one of the main requirements for the U.S.-backed ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. The crossing was closed Friday and Saturday because of confusion around operations.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said 17 medical evacuees and 27 companions had begun the crossing into Egypt. The same number was expected to head into Gaza. Israel didn't immediately confirm it.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington on Wednesday, though the major subject of discussion will be Iran, his office said.

Delays and mistreatment accusations



AP photo

Palestinians carry the belongings of relatives arriving in Gaza from Egypt following the long-awaited reopening of the Rafah border crossing, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, early Thursday.

Over the first four days of the crossing's opening, just 36 Palestinians requiring medical care were allowed to leave for Egypt, plus 62 companions, according to U.N. data. Rafah's reopening came after Israel retrieved the remains of the last hostage in Gaza and U.S. officials visited Israel to apply pressure.

Palestinian officials say nearly 20,000 people in Gaza seek to leave for medical care that isn't available in the war-shattered territory.

A group of Palestinian patients gathered Sunday in the courtyard of a Red Crescent hospital in Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis before making their way to the crossing for treatment abroad, family members told The Associated Press.

Amjad Abu Jedian, injured in the war, had been scheduled to leave for medical treatment on the first day of the crossing's reopening, but only five patients were allowed to travel, said his mother, Raja Abu Jedian. He was shot by an Israeli sniper while doing building work in the central Bureij refugee camp in July 2024, she said.

On Saturday, his family received a call from the World Health Organization about traveling on



AP photo

Palestinian patients and their relatives gather to board a bus in Khan Younis before they head to the Rafah crossing, leaving the Gaza Strip for medical treatment abroad on Wednesday.

Sunday, she said.

"We want them to take care of the patients (during their evacuation)," she said. "We want the Israeli military not to burden them."

Returning to Gaza

A group of Palestinians arrived Sunday at the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing to return to Gaza, Egypt's state-run Al-Qahera News satellite television reported.

Palestinians who returned to Gaza in the first few days of the crossing's operation described hours of delays and invasive searches by Israeli authorities and an Israeli-backed Palestinian armed group, Abu Shabab. Israel has denied mistreatment.

A European Union mission and Palestinian officials run the border crossing, and Israel has its screening facility some distance away.

The Rafah crossing, a lifeline for Gaza, was the only one not controlled by Israel before the war. Israel seized the Palestinian side in May 2024, though traffic through the crossing was heavily restricted even before that.

Restrictions negotiated by Israeli, Egyptian, Palestinian and international officials mean that only 50 people will be allowed to return to Gaza each day and 50 medical patients — with two

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Gaza

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companions for each — will be allowed to leave, but far fewer people have crossed so far.

Hamas negotiations

A senior Hamas official, Khaled Mashaal, said the militant group is open to discuss the future of its weapons as part of a "balanced approach" that includes the reconstruction of Gaza and protecting the Palestinian enclave from Israel. Such issues are central in the ceasefire's second phase.

Mashaal said the group has offered multiple options, including a long-term truce, as part of ongoing negotiations with Egyptian, Qatari and Turkish mediators.

Hamas plans to agree to a number of "guarantees," including a 10-year period of disarmament and an international peacekeeping force on Gaza's borders, "to maintain peace and prevent any clashes" between the militants and Israel, Mashaal said at a forum in Qatar.



AP photo

Ayada Al-Sheikh is welcomed by his sister, Nisreen, upon his arrival in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip after returning to Gaza following the long-awaited reopening of the Rafah border crossing, early Thursday.

Israel has repeatedly demanded the complete disarmament and dismantling of Hamas and its infrastructure, both military and civil.

Mashaal accused Israel of financing and arming militias, like the Abu Shabab group which operates in Israeli military-controlled areas in Gaza, "to create chaos."

Mashaal was asked about Hamas' position on the new Board of Peace, a Trump-led group of world leaders that is expected to meet for the first time Feb. 19 to raise money for Gaza's reconstruction. He didn't offer a specific answer but said the group won't accept "foreign intervention" in Palestinian affairs.

"Gaza is for the people of Gaza. Palestinians are for the people of Palestine," he said. "We will not accept foreign rule."



AP photo

Lit candles next to a sign from neighbors supporting the Guthrie family outside of Nancy Guthrie's house in the early morning hours of Sunday in Tucson, Ariz.

Guthrie

From page 10A

before leaving without comment.

Investigators believe Nancy Guthrie was taken against her will last weekend from her home just outside Tucson. DNA tests showed blood on Guthrie's front porch was a match to her, Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos has said.

Multiple press outlets have received alleged ransom letters during the past week. At least one letter made monetary demands and established Thursday evening and Monday evening as deadlines. Law enforcement officials declined to affirm that the letters were credible but said all tips were being investigated seriously.

The disappearance of the well-known TV host's mother has fixated Americans over the past week. Candles remained lit early Sunday near Nancy Guthrie's home, next to a sign expressing support for the family.

The White House said President Donald Trump called and spoke with Savannah Guthrie last week. The president told reporters on Friday that there are clues in the case "that I think are very strong."

Authorities say they have growing concerns about Nancy Guthrie's health because she needs daily medication. She is said to have a pacemaker and has dealt with high blood pressure and heart issues, according to sheriff's dispatcher audio on broadcastify.com.

The video released Saturday was the third this week that pleaded with potential kidnappers.

Speaking

From page 10A

helped get him to The Games.

"If it aligns with my moral values, I feel like I'm representing it," Hess said. "Just because I'm wearing the flag doesn't mean I represent everything that's going on in the U.S."

Among those who piled on Hess were YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul.

"From all true Americans If you don't want to represent this country go live somewhere else," he wrote on X, where he has 4.4 million followers. Minutes later, he was photographed sitting beside U.S. Vice President JD Vance at the U.S women's hockey game in Olympic host city Milan.

Trump said the next day that Hess' comments make it hard to root for him.

"Hess, a real Loser, says he doesn't represent his Country in the current Winter Olympics. If that's the case, he shouldn't have tried out for the Team, and it's too bad he's on it," he wrote on his Truth Social account.

Hess wasn't only athlete voicing discontent

At Friday's news conference with the athletes, freestyle skier Chris Lillis referenced Immigration and Customs Enforcement, saying he's "heartbroken" about what is happening in the U.S.

"I think that, as a country, we need to focus on respecting everybody's rights and making sure that we're treating our citizens as well as anybody, with love and respect," Lillis said. "I hope that when people look at athletes compete in the Olympics, they realize that that's the America that we're trying to represent."

And U.S. figure skater Amber Glenn said the LGBTQ+ community has had a hard time during the Trump administration.

In addition to Paul, conservative figures criticizing the athletes on social media include former NFL quarterback Brett Favre, actor Rob Schneider and U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds — who Trump has endorsed for the Florida gubernatorial race in November. And there was a flood of vitriol directed at them from ordinary Americans.

Glenn posted on Instagram that she had received "a scary amount of hate / threats for simply using my voice WHEN ASKED about how I feel." She added that she will start limiting her social media use for her well-being.

In response to questions from The Associated Press, the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee said in a statement Sunday that it is aware of an increasing amount of abusive and harmful messages directed toward the athletes and was doing its best to remove content and report credible threats to law enforcement.

"The USOPC stands firmly behind Team USA athletes and remains committed to their well-being and safety, both on and off the field of play," it said.

Anti-ICE protests in Italy

Support for the U.S. abroad has eroded as the Trump administration has pursued an aggressive posture on foreign policy, including punishing tariffs, military action in Venezuela and threats to invade Greenland.

During the opening ceremony, Team USA athletes were cheered on, but jeers and whistles could be heard as Vance and his wife, second lady Usha Vance, were shown on the stadium screens, waving American flags from the tribune.

In Milan, several demonstrations have broken out against the against the local deployment of ICE agents — even after clarification that they are from an investigations unit that is completely separate from the enforcement unit at the forefront of the immigration crackdown in the U.S.

Homeland Security Investigations, an ICE unit that focuses on cross-border crimes, frequently sends its officers to overseas events like the Olympics to assist with security. The ICE arm seen in the streets of the U.S. is known as Enforcement and Removal Operations, and there is no indication its officers were sent to Italy.

A demonstration on Saturday featured thousands of protesters. Toward its end, a small number of them clashed with police, who fired tear gas and a water cannon. That followed another one last week, when hundreds protested the deployment of ICE agents.



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Leadership Northeast

Can apes play pretend?

Scientists use an imaginary tea party to find out

By Adithi Ramakrishnan
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — By age 2, most kids know how to play pretend. They turn their bedrooms into faraway castles and hold make-believe tea parties.

The ability to make something out of nothing may seem uniquely human — a bedrock of creativity that's led to new kinds of art, music and more.

Now, for the first time, an experiment hints that an ape in captivity can have an imagination.

"What's really exciting about this work is that it suggests that the roots of this capacity for imagination are not unique to our species," said study co-author Christopher Krupenye with Johns Hopkins University.

Enter Kanzi, a bonobo who was raised in a lab and became a whiz at communicating with humans using graphic symbols. He combined different symbols to make them mean new things and learned how to create simple stone tools.

Scientists wondered whether Kanzi had the capacity to play pretend — that is, act like something is real while knowing it's not. They'd heard reports of female chimpanzees in the wild holding sticks as though they were babies and chimps in captivity dragging imaginary blocks on the ground after playing with real ones.

But imagination is abstract, so it's hard to know what's going on in the apes' heads. They

See APES | 13A



AP Photo

President Donald Trump greets Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz after an event about TrumpRx in the South Court Auditorium in the Old Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House campus Thursday in Washington.

'Take the vaccine, please'

Top US health official makes appeal as measles cases rise

By Matt Brown
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A leading U.S. health official on Sunday urged people to get inoculated against the measles at a time of outbreaks across several states and as the United States is at risk of losing its measles elimination status.

"Take the vaccine, please," said Dr. Mehmet Oz, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services administrator whose boss has raised suspicion about the safety and importance of vaccines. "We have a solution for our problem."

Oz, a heart surgeon, defended some recently revised federal vaccine

See VACCINE | 13A

US births dropped last year, suggesting 2024 uptick was short-lived

By Mike Stobbe
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. births fell a little in 2025, according to newly posted provisional data.

Slightly over 3.6 million births have been reported through birth certificates, or about 24,000 fewer than in 2024. The decline seems to confirm predictions by some experts, who doubted a slight increase in births in 2024 marked the start of an upward trend.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its provisional birth data late last week, filling in two months of missing data and offering the first good look at last year's tally.

The posted numbers account for nearly all of the babies born in 2025, according to the CDC. Data is still being compiled and analyzed, but the final tally might only add "a few thousand additional births," said Robert Anderson, who oversees birth and death tracking at the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.

Experts say people are marrying later and also worry about their ability to have the money, health insurance and other resources needed to raise children in a stable environment.

Last year, the Trump administration took steps to encourage more births, like issuing an executive order meant to expand access to and reduce costs of in vitro fertilization and backing the idea of "baby bonuses" that might encourage more couples to have kids.

So far, only the number of births are available — and not birth rates and other information that can give insights into who is having babies.

For example, although births increased in 2024 over the year before, the fertility rate actually fell, noted Karen Guzzo, a family demographer at the University of North Carolina.

The fertility rate is a statistic describing whether each generation has enough children to replace itself — about 2.1 kids per woman. It has been sliding in America for close to two decades as more women wait longer to have children or don't have kids at all.

For 2025, "I wouldn't expect birth or fertility rates to have risen; I would expect them to fall because childbearing is highly related to economic conditions and uncertainty," Guzzo said in an email.

Also, most of the births in 2025 would have been children conceived in 2024, when people were worried about affordability and political polarization, she added.

As a general trend, U.S. births and birth rates have been falling for years. They dropped in 2020, then rose for two straight years after that, an increase experts partly attributed to pregnancies put off amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

A 2% drop in 2023 put U.S. births at fewer than 3.6 million, the lowest one-year tally since 1979.

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.

Hims & Hers drops plan for knockoff of weight loss pill



Ritzau Scanpix via AP file

Novo Nordisk headquarters in Bagsvaerd, Denmark, on Feb. 5, 2025.

By Josh Funk
The Associated Press

Telehealth company Hims & Hers dropped its plan to offer a knockoff version of the weight-loss pill Wegovy on Saturday — two days after it announced the new drug and one day after the Food and Drug Administration threatened to restrict access to the ingredients needed to copy popular weight-loss medications.

Hims had said Thursday that it would offer a compounded version of the new Wegovy pill that drugmaker Novo Nordisk just began selling last month. Novo immediately threatened to sue Hims, and then the FDA said Friday that it plans to take decisive steps to limit access to the active ingredients in popular GLP-1 drugs like Wegovy, Ozempic and Zepbound.

Hims' own website still touted the new semaglutide pill offering Saturday afternoon — hours after it announced on X that it will no longer sell the medicine. Semaglutide is the chemical name for Wegovy.

"Since launching the compounded semaglutide pill on our platform, we've had constructive conversations with stakeholders across the industry. As a result, we have decided to stop offering access to this treatment," Hims said in its statement. "We remain committed to the millions of Americans who depend on us for access to safe, affordable, and personalized care."

Hims didn't say Saturday whether it will make any changes to the compounded versions of injectable weight-loss medications it has been selling as a result of the FDA action.

The San Francisco-based company had planned to significantly undercut Novo's price of $149 per month for the Wegovy pill by selling its version at $49 for the first month and $99 per month thereafter. Hims and other similar companies got started several years ago by offering cheap generic versions of drugs for hair loss, erectile dysfunction and other health issues before branching out into the multibillion market for obesity medications.

Novo plans to tout its new FDA-approved Wegovy pill in a celebrity-filled Super Bowl ad on Sunday. The Danish pharmaceutical giant didn't immediately comment Saturday on Hims' decision to drop the knockoff. Rival drugmaker Eli Lilly has said that it expects the FDA to approve an oral version of its orforglipron weight loss medication later this spring. But Wegovy is the first pill to hit the market.

The compounded medicine that Hims had planned to sell wasn't approved and had not gone through trials to demonstrate that it would be effective.

The FDA permits specialty pharmacies and other companies to make compounded versions of brand name drugs when they are in short supply. And the booming demand for GLP-1 drugs in recent years prompted companies like Hims to jump into the multibillion-dollar market for the drugs, with many patients willing to pay cash.

In 2024, the FDA said that GLP-1 drugs were no longer in a shortage, which was expected to put an end to the compounding. But companies like Hims relied on an exception to keep selling their versions of the medications because the practice is still permitted when a prescription is customized for the patient.

Storm Marta kills at least 4 in Morocco

The Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco — Flash floods caused by a storm in northern Morocco killed at least four people as the country struggled with days of heavy rain and water releases from overfilled dams that forced mass evacuations, local authorities said Sunday.

Three children — a girl and two boys aged 2 to 14 — and a man in his 30s died in a car that was swept away in a village near Tétouan, about 168 miles north of the capital Rabat, according to a statement from the Interior Ministry citing local authorities. Another person remains missing.

Local authorities said they will open an investigation into what happened.

The flash floods were caused by a storm system known as Marta, which moved into Morocco over the weekend and dumped up to 3.6 inches of rain on some northern cities, Houssine Youabed of Morocco's General Directorate of Meteorology told The Associated Press. Storm Marta also reached neighboring Spain and Portugal.

Days earlier, another storm, Leonardo, hit northern Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. In Morocco, it overfilled dams and rivers, damaging homes and crops, triggering minor landslides, and forcing more than 150,000 people to evacuate.

The turbulent weather has also secured at least a year's supply of drinking water for Morocco and boosted resources for the country's critical agricultural sector, officials said, providing relief after a years-long drought.



AP photo

A mother and her son evacuate through a flooded street after heavy rainfall in Ksar El Kebir, Morocco, on Jan. 30.

Vaccine

From page 12A

recommendations as well as past comments from President Donald Trump and the nation's health chief, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., about the efficacy of vaccines. From Oz, there was a clear message on the measles.

"Not all illnesses are equally dangerous and not all people are equally susceptible to those illnesses," he told CNN's "State of the Union." "But measles is one you should get your vaccine."

An outbreak in South Carolina in the hundreds has surpassed the recorded case count in Texas' 2025 outbreak, and there is also one on the Utah-Arizona border. Multiple other states have had confirmed cases this year. The outbreaks have mostly impacted children and have come as infectious disease experts warn that rising public distrust of vaccines generally may be contributing to the spread of a disease once declared eradicated by public health officials.

Asked in the television interview whether people should fear the measles, Oz replied, "Oh, for sure." He said Medicare and Medicaid will continue to cover the measles vaccine as part of the insurance programs.

"There will never be a barrier to Americans get access to the measles vaccine. And it is part of the core schedule," Oz said.

But Oz also said "we have advocated for measles vaccines all along" and that Kennedy "has been on the very front of this."

Questions about vaccines did not come up later in a Kennedy interview on Fox News Channel's "The Sunday Briefing," where he was asked about what kind of Super Bowl snack he might have (probably yogurt). He also he eats steak with sauerkraut in the mornings.

Critics of Kennedy have argued that the health secretary's longtime skepticism of U.S. vaccine recommendations and past sympathy for the unfounded claim that vaccines may cause autism may influence official public health guidance in ways contrary to the medical consensus.

Oz argued that Kennedy's stance was supportive of the measles vaccine despite Kennedy's general comments about the recommended vaccine schedule.

"When the first outbreak happened in Texas, he said, get your vaccines for measles, because that's an example of an ailment that you should get vaccinated against," Oz said.

The Republican administration last month dropped some vaccine recommendations for children, an overhaul of the traditional vaccine schedule that the Department of Health and Human Services said was in response to a request from Trump.

Trump asked the agency to review how peer nations approach vaccine recommendations and consider revising U.S. guidance accordingly.

States, not the federal government, have the authority to require vaccinations for schoolchildren. While federal requirements often influence those state regulations, some states have begun creating their own alliances to counter the administration's guidance on vaccines.

U.S. vaccination rates have dropped and the share of children with exemptions has reached an all-time high, according to federal data. At the same time, rates of diseases that can be protected against with vaccines, such as measles and whooping cough, are rising across the country.

Kennedy's past anti-vaccine activism

Kennedy's past skepticism of vaccines has come under scrutiny since Trump first nominated him to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.

During his Senate confirmation testimony last year, Kennedy told lawmakers that a closely scrutinized 2019 trip he took to Samoa, which came before a devastating measles outbreak, had "nothing to do with vaccines."

But documents obtained by The Guardian and The Associated Press undermine that testimony. Emails sent by staffers at the U.S. Embassy and the United Nations said that Kennedy sought to meet with top Samoan officials during his trip to the Pacific island nation.

Samoan officials later said Kennedy's trip bolstered the credibility of anti-vaccine activists before the measles outbreak, which sickened thousands of people and killed 83, mostly children under age 5.

Mixed messaging on autism, vaccines

Oz's comments mark a broader pattern among administration officials of voicing discordant and at times contradictory statements about the efficacy of vaccines amid an overhaul of U.S. public health policy.

Officials have walked a fine line in criticizing past U.S. vaccine policy, often at times appearing to express sympathy for unfounded conspiracy theories from anti-vaccine activists, while also not straying too far from established science.

During a Senate hearing Tuesday, Jay Bhattacharya, the director of the National Institutes of Health, said no single vaccine causes autism, but he did not rule out the possibility that research may find some combination of vaccines could have negative health side effects.

But Kennedy, in Senate testimony, has argued that a link between vaccines and autism has not been disproved.

He has previously claimed that some components of vaccines, like the mercury-containing preservative thimerosal, may cause childhood neurological disorders such as autism. Most vaccines for measles, mumps and rubella do not contain thimerosal. A federal vaccine advisory board overhauled by Kennedy last year voted to no longer recommend thimerosal-containing vaccines.

Administration public health officials often cite the need to restore trust in public health systems after the coronavirus pandemic, when vaccine policy and the general public health response to the deadly pandemic became a highly polarizing topic in American politics.

Misinformation and conspiracy theories about the public health system also spread during the pandemic, and longtime anti-vaccine activist groups saw a swell in interest from the wider public.

Kennedy, who for years led the anti-vaccine activist group Children's Health Defense, has been criticized for ordering reviews of vaccines and public health guidelines that leading medical research groups have deemed settled science.

Public health experts also criticized the president for making unfounded claims about highly politicized health issues. During a September Oval Office event, Trump asserted without evidence that Tylenol and vaccines are linked to a rise in the incidence of autism in the United States.

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Apes

From page 12A

could just be imitating researchers or mistaking imaginary objects for the real thing.

Researchers adapted the playbook for studying young children to stage a juice party for Kanzi. They poured imaginary juice from a pitcher into two cups, then pretended to empty just one. They asked Kanzi which cup he wanted and he pointed to the cup still containing pretend juice 68% of the time.

To make sure Kanzi wasn't confusing real with fake, they also ran a test with actual juice. Kanzi chose the real juice over the pretend almost 80% of the time, "which suggests that he really can tell the difference between real juice and imaginary juice," said Amalia Bastos, a study co-author from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

A third experiment placing fake grapes into two jars had similar positive results.

But not all scientists are convinced that Kanzi is playing pretend like humans do. There's a difference between envisioning juice being poured into a cup and maintaining the pretense that it's real, said Duke University comparative psychologist Michael Tomasello.

"To be convinced of that I would need to see Kanzi actually pretend to pour water into a container himself," Tomasello wrote in an email. He had no role in the study, which was published Thursday in the journal Science.

Kanzi grew up among humans, so it's hard to say whether his abilities extend to all apes or are because of his special upbringing. He died last year at the age of 44.

Many great ape species in the wild are critically endangered and it'll take more research to understand what their minds are capable of.

"Kanzi opened this path for a lot of future studies," Bastos 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.

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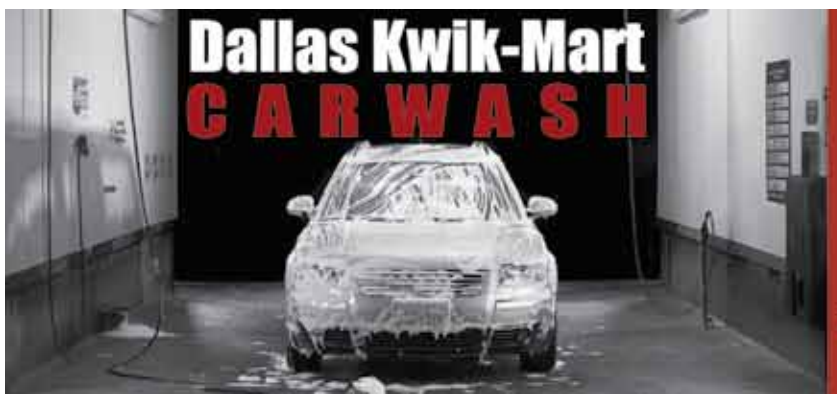


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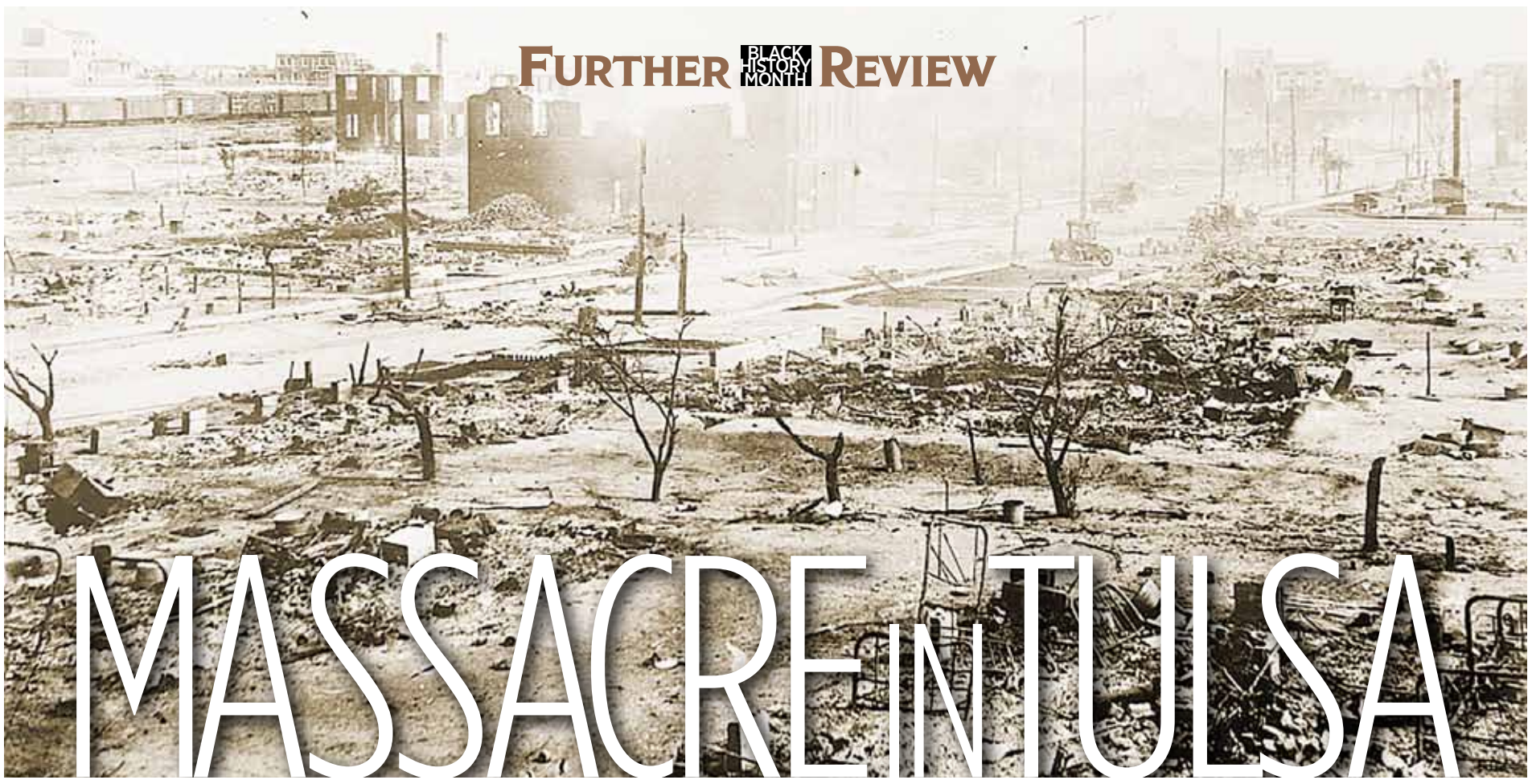
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FURTHER BLACK HISTORY MONTH REVIEW

MASSACRE IN TULSA

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

One hundred and five years ago this May, arguably the worst racial conflict in U.S. history broke out in Tulsa, Oklahoma — in a section of town called the Greenwood District, where Black folks lived and prospered. Booker T. Washington himself coined a nickname for the area: Black Wall Street.

For decades, what happened in Greenwood was referred to as a race riot, but no longer — what happened that day was no riot. It was an attack on the Black community by an armed and organized white mob.

A CITY WAITING FOR A SPARK

Like many cities of the Jim Crow era — especially in the South and the Southwest — Tulsa was segregated. Black laborers might have jobs serving the white community, but they lived, dined, shopped and entertained themselves in Greenwood. By all accounts, the community was a thriving, healthy one.

But the gulf between white and Black residents widened on May 30, 1921, when a young man named Dick Rowland — who shined shoes outside an office building in downtown Tulsa — took a bathroom break. Not allowed to use the whites-only restroom in his own building, he had to walk down the street, take the elevator to a top floor and use the "Colored" restroom.

Most days, Rowland did this with no problem. This one day, however, something happened between him and the 17-year-old woman who operated the elevator. It's theorized he tripped and bumped into her or stepped on her foot. She let out a scream, which frightened Rowland. He bolted out of the building.

The police arrived, interviewed the woman and declined to do anything: No harm, no foul. But that's not the way rumor mills work. The next day, the white community was all abuzz about the Black boy who raped a white woman in a downtown elevator. The police tracked Rowland down and brought him in.

The afternoon newspaper, the Tulsa World, was very much a white supremacist-leaning publication and very much into sensationlistic stories and headlines. The paper fabricated a story about an attempted rape, noted the man had been arrested and jailed and left it to its white readers to connect the dots.

Which leads to another unfortunate artifact of the Jim Crow era: lynch mobs.

Mobs of white men were known to confiscate prisoners from local law enforcement officials, take the prisoners out of town and hang them. Many police departments regarded lynch mobs as an efficient way of taking care of business and a deterrent to further crime.



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Armed white men drive through the streets of Greenwood on June 1, 1921.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Smoke billows over the Greenwood district of Tulsa.

THE MASSACRE BEGINS

Leaders of the Black community saw it coming. A group of about 25 Black men, many of them World War I veterans, came to the courthouse around 9 p.m. that evening offering to provide security for Rowland. The sheriff declined, despite a growing white mob outside. An hour or so later, a group of 75 Black men returned to again offer their services. Again, the sheriff declined.

This time, however, a member of the white mob — which had grown to about 2,000 — attempted to snatch away a firearm from one of the Black men. The gun discharged.

That was when hell broke loose.

With the white mob on their heels, the Black men bolted for home. The local police deputized 500 white men and boys, who broke into local stores to arm themselves and then drove through Greenwood, firing at residents from their cars. By midnight, white men were running amok through the area, setting fires to Black-owned property and then blocking fire departments from offering aid.

At daybreak the morning of June 1, the massacre escalated when 10,000 armed white men flooded into Greenwood. They went from house to house, arresting residents and looting the homes before torching them. More than a thousand homes were destroyed that day, along with 12 churches, five hotels, 31 restaurants, four drug stores, eight doctor's offices, two dozen grocery stores and the Black public library.

The spree didn't end until 8 p.m. that evening — a good 18 hours after it had started — when the Oklahoma City National Guard managed to restore order. The Guard took custody of the about 6,000 Black residents who had been taken captive. Members of the white mob were allowed to return to their homes.

PRISONERS IN THEIR OWN CITY



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Black survivors who had been taken captive by the mob were housed at the state fairgrounds. The National Guard put them to work clearing rubble and burying bodies.

Over time, white business owners wanted their manual labor back. Internees were released to white business owners who vouched for them. The city issued green identification cards so the Black laborers could prove they were employed and had permission to move through the city.

Meanwhile, most white residents — and the white-owned newspapers — would blame the Black community for the entire incident. The state's lead attorney granted immunity to any white people who had looted buildings or had killed Black people during the raids.

THE RELIEF EFFORT



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

More than 10,000 people were left homeless by the massacre.

Realizing victims of the riot were unlikely to get help from anyone else, the Red Cross stepped in to declare Tulsa a natural disaster area. The mayor of Tulsa issued an announcement saying, essentially, that the Red Cross was on its own for any relief effort.

For months, the Red Cross supplied shelter, medicine and food for victims of the massacre while they rebuilt their lives and their homes. Many of the homeless would live in tents or thrown-together shacks for more than a year afterward.

Suggestions were made, from time to time, to offer aid or even reparations to the residents of Greenwood. Those suggestions went nowhere.

COUNTING UP THE DEAD



OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

One question remained: How many had lost their lives in the massacre? The death toll at the time was reported to be 36: 26 Black people and 10 white people. Other estimates went as high as 200 Black people. The Red Cross said somewhere between 55 and 300 had died.

A 2001 state commission also resulted in conflicting numbers. Only 39 deaths have been documented, but the actual number is likely to be somewhere between 100 and 300. Survivors would tell stories of Black bodies being loaded onto trains and dumped off bridges into the Arkansas River. Others were tossed into mass graves.

Recently, the city of Tulsa has made an effort to locate and document these mass graves, working off the descriptions from survivors. Only a dozen or so graves have been found, but the search goes on.

Sources: Library of Congress, Oklahoma Historical Society, Tulsa Historical Society and Museum, Oklahoma History Center, Greenwood Cultural Center, Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission, City of Tulsa, Tulsa World, the Washington Post, the New York Times, CNN, PBS.org, History.com, Smithsonian magazine

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TODAY'S FORECAST



Valerie Smock
Meteorologist
WBRE/WYOU

After a cold start Monday morning, temperatures will rebound into the low- to mid-20s with a mix of sun and clouds.

A bigger warmup is coming toward the middle of the week. Temperatures on Tuesday and Wednesday will be in the low- to mid-30s. The weather pattern will become a bit tricky later this week. There is the potential for a couple of storm systems to impact us. Right now, it looks like there is a chance for snow showers on Tuesday and a wintry mix on Wednesday.

Snow showers are possible for Thursday with a high near 30. Friday will be mostly cloudy and near 30. We go through the weekend with highs in the mid 30s. Saturday will feature some sun and clouds while snow showers are possible Sunday.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
23 / 10	35 / 31	37 / 24	31 / 14	31 / 9	35 / 16	37 / 22
Cold with clouds and sun	Not as cold	A bit of morning snow	Breezy in the morning	Low clouds	Times of clouds and sun	Snow showers possible

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:06 a.m.
Sunset today	5:30 p.m.
Moonrise today	1:03 a.m.
Moonset today	10:30 a.m.

Last	New	First	Full
Feb 9	Feb 17	Feb 24	Mar 3

WEATHER HISTORY

On Feb. 9, 1934, the temperature dropped to 11 degrees below zero in Philadelphia and 15 degrees below zero in New York City.

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TEMPERATURES

High	9
Low	-3
Normal high	37
Normal Low	21
Record high	59 (1925)
Record low	-15 (1934)

PRECIPITATION

24-hour total	0.00"
Month to date	0.07"
Normal m-t-d	0.57"
Year to date	2.12"
Normal y-t-d	3.16"

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

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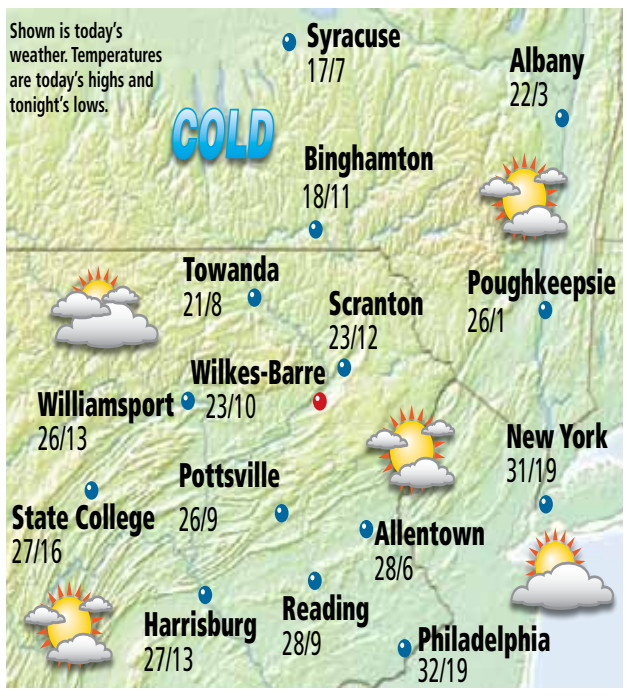
Sunday	62
Month to date	409
Season to date	4015
Last season to date	3574
Normal season to date	3574

RIVER LEVELS

In feet as of 7 a.m. Sunday.

Susquehanna	Stage	Chg	Fld Stg
Wilkes-Barre	5.03	-0.08	22
Towanda	3.61	-0.42	16
Lehigh			
Bethlehem	1.47	+0.02	16
Delaware			
Port Jervis	2.98	+0.12	18

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



NEW YORK CITY

High: 31. **Low:** 19. Not as cold with sunshine mixing with some clouds today. Mostly cloudy and cold tonight. Mostly cloudy tomorrow.

PHILADELPHIA

High: 32. **Low:** 19. Not as cold with sunshine mixing with some clouds today. Considerable cloudiness tonight. Not as cold tomorrow with clouds and sun.

POCONOS

Highs: 19 to 25. **Lows:** 4 to 10. Windy and not as cold today with times of clouds and sun. Mostly cloudy tonight.

FINGER LAKES

Highs: 14 to 20. **Lows:** 4 to 10. Low clouds and bitterly cold today. Becoming partly cloudy tonight. A bit of snow, sleet, and freezing rain tomorrow.

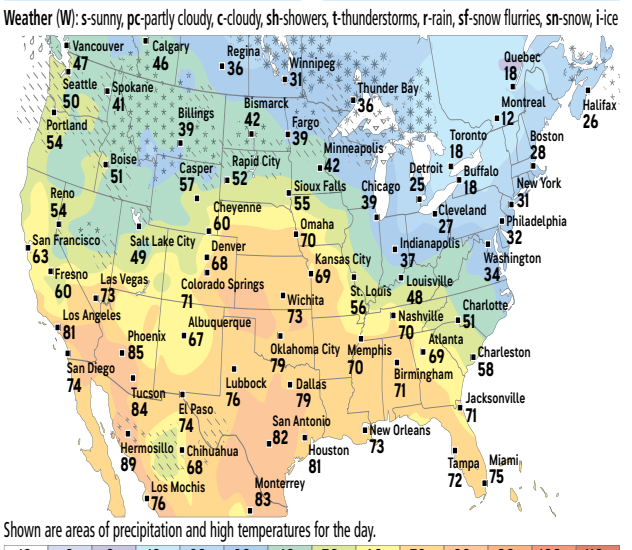
JERSEY SHORE

Highs: 28 to 34. **Lows:** 16 to 22. Breezy in the morning; otherwise, cold with sunshine mixing with some clouds today. Mostly cloudy and cold tonight. Clouds and sun tomorrow.

NATIONAL WEATHER

	Today Hi/Lo/W	Tuesday Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	69/50/s	72/55/c
Baltimore	33/20/s	42/31/c
Billings	39/24/sf	45/27/pc
Boston	28/12/s	32/26/sn
Buffalo	18/12/c	36/27/sn
Charlotte	51/32/pc	69/51/pc
Chicago	39/33/pc	43/27/pc
Cleveland	27/23/c	40/27/sh
Dallas	79/60/c	72/53/c
Denver	68/28/s	51/30/c
Detroit	25/21/c	39/25/i
Honolulu	78/72/sh	81/71/sh
Houston	81/61/c	74/61/c
Indianapolis	37/30/pc	44/29/pc
Las Vegas	73/52/pc	71/57/c
Milwaukee	36/33/pc	41/24/c
Nashville	70/42/s	71/45/c
New Orleans	73/55/s	72/57/c
Norfolk	36/28/pc	56/41/s
Oklahoma City	79/54/c	65/37/c
Orlando	74/48/s	79/52/s
Phoenix	85/58/s	80/63/pc
Pittsburgh	27/20/pc	46/29/pc
Portland, ME	27/2/s	29/22/c
Portland, OR	54/35/sh	55/34/c
Sacramento	65/47/c	57/48/sh
St. Louis	56/43/s	58/31/pc
San Francisco	63/51/c	58/52/r
Seattle	50/37/sh	55/38/pc
Washington, DC	34/23/s	44/34/pc

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: A corridor of wintry weather will extend from Montana to Michigan today. A few showers will dot the Pacific Northwest. It will be dry and turning warmer across the Plains and Mississippi Valley.

AccuWeather | Go to AccuWeather.com

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US SKIING ICON VONN SUFFERS BROKEN LEG IN CRASH AT OLYMPICS • PAGE 6B

Sports Monday



IN MEMORY

Joseph J. Soprano Jr.

Times Leader executive editor

Penn State graduate 1988

contact us >> sports@timesleader.com

Defensive dominance

SEAHAWKS BLANK PATRIOTS FOR THREE QUARTERS IN BIG WIN IN SUPER BOWL LX

PAGE 3B



Seahawks coach Mike Macdonald, right, celebrates with running back Kenneth Walker III after winning Super Bowl LX on Sunday in Santa Clara, Calif. Walker earned MVP honors to back up a stellar performance by Seattle's defense in a 29-13 victory. (Morry Gash | AP photo)

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Jim Monk
Service Manager, Monk HVAC

LOCAL SCHEDULE

MONDAY
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
Berwick at Lewisburg, 7:30 p.m.
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
Wyoming Area at Pittston Area, 7:15 p.m.
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Wilkes-Barre Area at Wyoming Valley West, 4:30 p.m.
Wyoming Area at Lake-Lehman, 4:30 p.m.

TUESDAY
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
Wyoming Seminary at Wyoming Valley West, 7:15 p.m.
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
Lake-Lehman at Wyoming Area, 5:45 p.m.
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Berwick at Pittston Area, 4 p.m.
Nanticoke Area at Tunkhannock, 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
Southern Columbia at Berwick, 7:30 p.m.
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
WVC Tournament Semifinals
(at Holy Redeemer HS)
Hazleton Area vs. Division 2 runner-up, time TBA
Nanticoke Area vs. Crestwood, time TBA
H.S. WRESTLING
Wilkes-Barre Area at Dallas, 7 p.m.
Scranton Prep at Crestwood, 7 p.m.
Wyoming Area at Pittston Area, 7 p.m.
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Holy Redeemer at Dallas, 4:30 p.m.
Wyoming Seminary at Hazleton Area, 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
WVC Tournament Semifinals
(at Wilkes-Barre Area HS)
Dallas vs. Division 2 runner-up, time TBA
Wyoming Area vs. Crestwood, time TBA

FRIDAY
H.S. BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING
Wilkes-Barre Area at Hazleton Area, 4:30 p.m.

SATURDAY
AHL
Syracuse at Penguins, 6:05 p.m.
H.S. BOYS BASKETBALL
WVC Tournament Championship
team TBD, time TBD, at Hazleton Area HS
H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL
WVC Tournament Championship
team TBD, time TBD, at Hazleton Area HS

SUNDAY
AHL
Cleveland at Penguins, 3:05 p.m.

LATEST LINE

NBA

Monday

FAVORITE	LINE	O/U	UNDERDOG
Detroit	2½	(223½)	at CHARLOTTE
at ORLANDO	9½	(218½)	Milwaukee
at MIAMI	9½	(244½)	Utah
Chicago	3½	(222½)	at BROOKLYN
at MINNESOTA	6½	(235½)	Atlanta
at NEW ORLEANS	5½	(232½)	Sacramento
Cleveland	1½	(233½)	at DENVER
Oklahoma City	4½	(220½)	at LA LAKERS
at GOLDEN STATE	6½	(225½)	Memphis
Philadelphia	2	(230½)	at PORTLAND

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Monday

FAVORITE	LINE	UNDERDOG
at CHICAGO STATE	1½	Saint Francis (PA)
Navy	6½	at BUCKNELL
at UAPB	6½	Jackson State
at ST. JOHN'S	14½	Xavier
at LAMAR	8½	Northwestern State
at SE LOUISIANA	1½	Incarnate Word
at FLORIDA A&M	2½	Prairie View A&M
Yale	8½	at HOWARD
at LOUISVILLE	6½	NC State
Central Arkansas	7½	at NORTH ALABAMA
at BETHUNE-COOKMAN	7½	Texas Southern
at INDIANA STATE	1½	Southern Illinois
at DRAKE	2½	Valparaiso
at GRAMBLING	4½	Alabama A&M
at SFA	15½	East Texas A&M
UT Rio Grande Valley	2½	at NICHOLLS STATE
at MCNEESE	18½	Houston Christian
at CHARLESTON (SC)	1½	UNC Wilmington
Illinois State	9½	at EVANSVILLE
Texas A&M-CC	1½	at NEW ORLEANS
Alcorn State	5½	at MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
at NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	7½	Delaware State
Belmont	2½	at BRADLEY
at INDIANA	11½	Oregon
Arizona	2½	at KANSAS
at SOUTHERN	7½	Alabama State
at MURRAY STATE	5½	Northern Iowa

For the latest odds, go to BetMGM Sportsbook

OLYMPICS ON NBC TV/STREAMING ON PEACOCK

ALPINE SKIING
4:30 a.m.
Streaming only — Men's Team Combined: Downhill
USA — Men's Team Combined: Downhill
5:45 a.m.
USA — Women's Downhill (Re-air)
6:50 a.m.
Streaming only — Men's Team Combined: Slalom
9 a.m.
USA — Men's Team Combined: Slalom
12:45 p.m.
NBC — Men's Team Combined: Downhill & Slalom

BIATHLON
12:15 a.m.
USA — Mixed 4x6km Relay (Re-air)

CURLING
4:05 a.m.
Streaming only — Czechia vs. Estonia (Mixed doubles RR)
Streaming only — Italy vs. United States (Mixed doubles RR)
Streaming only — Norway vs. South Korea (Mixed doubles RR)
Streaming only — Switzerland vs. Canada (Mixed doubles RR)
9 a.m.
USA — Italy vs. United States (Mixed doubles Round-Robin)
12:05 p.m.
Streaming only — Mixed Doubles Semifinal
Streaming only — Mixed Doubles Semifinal
5 p.m.
CNBC — Mixed Doubles Semifinal
6:30 p.m.
CNBC — Mixed Doubles Semifinal
2:45 p.m.
USA — Mixed Doubles Semifinal (Re-air)

FIGURE SKATING
1:30 a.m.
USA — Team: Pairs, Women's, Men's Free (Re-air)
1:20 p.m.
USA — On USA: Rhythm Dance

FREESTYLE SKIING
6:30 a.m.
Streaming only — Women's Freeski Slopestyle: Final
USA — Women's Freeski Slopestyle: Final

HOCKEY
6:10 a.m.
Streaming only — Japan vs. Italy (Women's Group B)
10:40 a.m.
Streaming only — Germany vs. France (Women's Group B)
2:40 p.m.
USA — Switzerland vs. United States (Women's Group A)
3:10 p.m.
Streaming only — Canada vs. Czechia (Women's Group A)
5 p.m.
USA — Canada vs. Czechia (Women's Group A)
11 p.m.
USA — Switzerland vs. United States (Women's Group A) Re-air

LUGE
11 a.m.
Streaming only — Women's Singles Luge: Runs 1-2
USA — Women's Singles Luge: Run 1
12:30 p.m.
USA — Women's Singles Luge: Run 2
8 p.m.
USA — Women's Singles Luge: Runs 1-2 (Re-air)

SKI JUMPING
Noon
Streaming only — Men's Normal Hill
5:30 p.m.
USA — Men's Normal Hill
4:15 p.m.
USA — Men's Normal Hill (Re-air)

SNOWBOARDING
1:30 p.m.
NBC — Women's Snowboard Big Air: Final
Streaming only — Women's Snowboard Big Air: Final

SPEED SKATING
11:30 a.m.
Streaming only — Women's 1000m
USA — Women's 1000m
Noon
6:45 p.m.
USA — Women's 1000m (Re-air)

SPORTS ON TV

MONDAY
COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN)
6 p.m.
CBSSN — Navy at Bucknell
6:30 p.m.
FS1 — Xavier at St. John's
7 p.m.
ESPN — NC State at Louisville
8 p.m.
CBSSN — UNC-Wilmington at Coll. of Charleston
8:30 p.m.
FS1 — Oregon at Indiana
9 p.m.
ESPN — Arizona at Kansas
ESPNU — Alabama State at Southern U.
10 p.m.
CBSSN — Northern Iowa at Murray State
COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN)
7:30 p.m.
SECN — Kentucky at Texas
9 p.m.
ESPN2 — Oklahoma at Vanderbilt
COLLEGE HOCKEY (MEN)
7:30 p.m.
NHLN — Beanpot Tournament: Boston U. vs. Boston College, Championship, Boston
GOLF
7 p.m.
ESPN2 — TGL: The Bay Golf Club vs. Los Angeles Golf Club
SOCCER (MEN)
5:50 p.m.
FS2 — CONCACAF U-17 Qualifier Group Stage: Barbados vs. Mexico, Group A, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
TENNIS
5 a.m. (Tuesday)
TENNIS CHANNEL — Dallas-ATP, Rotterdam-ATP, Buenos Aires-ATP, & Doha-WTA Early Rounds
6 a.m. (Tuesday)
TENNIS CHANNEL — Dallas-ATP, Rotterdam-ATP, Buenos Aires-ATP, & Doha-WTA Early Rounds
UNRIVALED BASKETBALL
7:30 p.m.
TNT, TRUTV — Vinyl vs. Phantom, Miami
8:45 p.m.
TNT, TRUTV — Rose vs. Mist, Miami

NFL

NFL Playoff Glance
Wild-card Playoffs
L.A. Rams 34, Carolina 31
Chicago 31, Green Bay 27
Buffalo 27, Jacksonville 24
San Francisco 23, Philadelphia 19
New England 16, L.A. Chargers 3
Houston 30, Pittsburgh 6
Divisional Playoffs
Denver 33, Buffalo 30, OT
Seattle 41, San Francisco 6
New England 28, Houston 16
L.A. Rams 20, Chicago 17, OT
Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 25
AFC
New England 10, Denver 7
NFC
Seattle 31, L.A. Rams 27
Super Bowl LIX
Sunday, Feb. 8
At Santa Clara, Calif.
Seattle 29, New England 13

NBA

NBA Glance
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	34	19	.642	—
Boston	34	19	.642	—
Toronto	32	22	.593	2½
Philadelphia	30	22	.577	3½
Brooklyn	14	37	.275	19

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	27	24	.529	—
Miami	28	26	.519	½
Atlanta	26	28	.481	2½
Charlotte	25	28	.472	3
Washington	14	38	.269	13½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	38	13	.745	—
Cleveland	32	21	.604	7
Chicago	24	29	.453	15
Milwaukee	21	29	.420	16½
Indiana	13	40	.245	26

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	36	16	.692	—
Houston	32	19	.627	3½
Memphis	20	31	.392	15½
Dallas	19	33	.365	17
New Orleans	14	40	.259	23

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	40	13	.755	—
Denver	34	19	.642	6
Minnesota	32	22	.593	8½
Portland	25	28	.472	15
Utah	16	37	.302	24

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	32	19	.627	—
Phoenix	31	22	.585	2
Golden State	28	25	.528	5
L.A. Clippers	25	27	.481	7½
Sacramento	12	42	.222	21½

Saturday's Games
Brooklyn 127, Washington 113
Houston 112, Oklahoma City 106
San Antonio 138, Dallas 125
Orlando 120, Utah 117
Charlotte 126, Atlanta 119
Denver 136, Chicago 120
L.A. Lakers 105, Golden State 99
Philadelphia 109, Phoenix 103
Portland 122, Memphis 115
Cleveland 132, Sacramento 126
Sunday's Games
New York 111, Boston 89
Miami 132, Washington 101
Toronto 122, Indiana 104
L.A. Clippers 115, Minnesota 96
Monday's Games
Detroit at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Orlando, 7:30 p.m.
Utah at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Sacramento at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Cleveland at Denver, 9 p.m.
Memphis at Golden State, 10 p.m.
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers, 10 p.m.
Philadelphia at Portland, 10 p.m.
Tuesday's Games
Indiana at New York, 7:30 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Houston, 8 p.m.
Dallas at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
San Antonio at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
Atlanta at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Milwaukee at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Washington at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Detroit at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
New York at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Houston, 8 p.m.
Miami at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Portland at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Memphis at Denver, 9 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Sacramento at Utah, 9 p.m.
San Antonio at Golden State, 10 p.m.

NHL

NHL Glance
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	55	37	14	4	78	199	140
Montreal	57	32	17	8	72	199	187
Detroit	58	33	19	6	72	174	175
Buffalo	57	32	19	6	70	195	176
Boston	57	32	20	5	69	195	182
Ottawa	57	28	22	7	63	191	184
Toronto	57	27	21	9	63	188	194
Florida	57	29	25	3	61	174	191

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	57	36	15	6	78	197	163
Pittsburgh	56	29	15	12	70	192	169
N.Y. Islanders	58	32	21	5	69	169	162
Columbus	56	29	20	7	65	179	177
Washington	59	29	23	7	65	189	177
Philadelphia	56	25	20	11	61	167	180
New Jersey	57	28	27	2	58	146	175
N.Y. Rangers	57	22	29	6	50	151	180

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	55	37	9	9	83	212	138
Minnesota	58	34	14	10	78	196	169
Dallas	57	34	14	9	77	193	160
Utah	57	30	23	4	64	183	157
Nashville	57	26	24	7	59	169	198
Chicago	57	22	26	9	53	154	185
Winnipeg	56	22	26	8	52	160	175
St. Louis	57	20	28	9	49	147	203

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	57	27	16	14	68	191	179
Edmonton	58	28	22	8	64	198	194
Seattle	56	27	20	9	63	162	165
Anaheim	56	30	23	3	63	185	195
Los Angeles	56	23	19	14	60	146	161
San Jose	55	27	24	4	58	171	193
Calgary	56	23	27	6	52	142	169
Vancouver	57	18	33	6	42	149	210

Saturday's Games
No games scheduled
Sunday's Games
No games scheduled
Monday's Games
No games scheduled
Tuesday's Games
No games scheduled

AHL

AHL Glance
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Providence	44	35	8	1	0	71	145	86
Penguins	48	32	12	2	2	68	161	124
Charlotte	44	26	15	3	0	55	147	123
Hershey	44	20	16	6	2	48	123	132
Lehigh Valley	45	21	20	2	2	46	127	142
Bridgeport	45	20	20	2	3	45	140	137
Hartford	45	16	23	4	2	38	115	155
Springfield	46	16	24	4	2	38	114	162

North Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Laval	47	29	14	2	2	62	151	124
Syracuse	46	26	16	3	1	56	149	122
Toronto	45	23	15	4	3	53	142	147
Cleveland	45	23	15	6	1	53	130	137
Rochester	45	23	16	4	2	52	143	130
Belleville	49	20	21	8	0	48	159	178
Utica	43	13	22	5	3	34	103	141

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Central Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Grand Rapids	45	35	7	2	1	73	156	88
Chicago	43	22	11	5	5	54	139	134
Texas	45	22	19	3	1	48	129	137
Manitoba	42	22	17	3	0	47	110	117
Milwaukee	43	19	20	2	2	42	122	127
Rockford	47	17	26	2	2	38	127	158
Iowa	44	13	26	4	1	31	98	141

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OL	SL	Pts	GF	GA
Ontario	47	31	14	1	1	64	159	130
Colorado	44	29	10	2	3	63	146	104
Bakersfield	46	25	14	7	0	57	159	142
San Jose	43	26	14	1	2	55	143	131
Coachella Val.	45	25	15	5	0	55	154	140
San Diego	44	21	14	6	3	51	130	126
Tucson	45	21	16	8	0	50	147	147
Henderson	43	18	17	6	2	44	134	137
Calgary	47	16	19	10	2	44	127	171
Abbotsford	48	16	26	3	3	38	105	164

Saturday's Games
Laval 4, Cleveland 1
Toronto 5, Springfield 1
Grand Rapids 5, Charlotte 2
Rochester 5, Utica 1
Abbotsford 2, San Jose 1
Bridgeport 5, Lehigh Valley 1
Providence 2, Hartford 1
Rockford 3, Milwaukee 1
Syracuse 5, Belleville 2
Penguins 4, Hershey 3
Texas 4, Manitoba 3
Tucson 6, Calgary 5
Coachella Valley 4, Henderson 3
Ontario 4, Bakersfield 3
Colorado 6, Chicago 2
Sunday's Games
No games scheduled
Monday's Games
No games scheduled

GOLF

WM Phoenix Open Par Scores
Sunday
Final Round
At Stadium Course
Scottsdale, Ariz.
Purse: $9.6 million
Yardage: 7,261; Par: 71
(x-won on first playoff hole)

x-Chris Gotterup	63-71-70-64—268	-16
Hideki Matsuyama	68-64-68-68—268	-16
Akshay Bhatia	68-67-67-67—269	-15
Nicolai Hojgaard	66-70-65-68—269	-15
Si Woo Kim	73-62-66-68—269	-15
Scottie Scheffler	73-65-67-64—269	-15
Michael Thorbjornsen	66-71-65-67—269	-15
Jake Knapp	67-69-66-68—270	-14
Matt Fitzpatrick	65-70-67-69—271	-13
Pierceson Coody	66-68-70-68—272	-12
Ryo Hisatsune	68-63-70-71—272	-12
Viktor Hovland	69-70-65-68—272	-12
Zecheng Dou	72-66-72-63—273	-11
Maverick McNealy	69-65-72-67—273	-11
Kevin Roy	67-69-69-68—273	-11
Daniel Berger	67-71-71-65—274	-10
Jordan L. Smith	70-70-68-66—274	-10
Jacob Bridgeman	71-68-69-67—275	-9
Rickie Fowler	71-68-69-67—275	-9
Michael Kim	71-65-72-67—275	-9
Mac Meissner	71-68-69-67—275	-9
Sepp Straka	71-69-67-68—275	-9
Sahith Theegala	70-65-70-70—275	-9
Ryan Fox	69-69-70-68—276	-8
Rico Hoey	71-69-70-66—276	-8
Rasmus Hojgaard	68-70-66-72—276	-8
Kurt Kitayama	69-71-70-66—276	-8
Harris English	70-69-70-68—277	-7
A.J. Ewart	69-68-72-68—277	-7
Ben Griffin	71-67-69-70—277	-7
M. Hughes	68-69-69-71—277	-7
Stephan Jaeger	70-66-69-72—277	-7
Min Woo Lee	71-65-68-73—277	-7
Nick Taylor	71-68-71-67—277	-7
Wyndham Clark	73-68-68-69—278	-6
Tom Kim	73-66-71-68—278	-6
John Parry	69-66-68-75—278	-6
J.T. Poston	74-67-70-67—278	-6
Alex Smalley	74-67-68-69—278	-6
Sam Stevens	66-70-72-70—278	-6
John Keefer	69-72-69-69—279	-5
Keith Mitchell	68-71-69-71—279	-5
Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen	67-70-71-71—279	-5
Kristoffer Reitan	70-67-75-67—279	-5
Xander Schauffele	71-70-73-65—279	-5
Sami Valimaki	70-68-73-68—279	-5
Cameron Young	70-69-69-71—279	-5
Zachary Bauchou	68-68-73-71—280	-4
Michael Brennan	70-69-67-74—280	-4
Christo Lamprecht	67-73-69-71—280	-4
Seung-taek Lee	71-70-71-68—280	-4
Max McGreevy	67-72-69-72—280	-4
Chad Ramey	71-67-72-70—280	-4
Brian Campbell	68-69-70-74—281	-3
Joe Highsmith	70-70-70-71—281	-3
Kensei Hirata	68-73-70-70—281	-3
Seonghyeon Kim	70-71-68-72—281	-3
Collin Morikawa	72-69-71-69—281	-3
Sudarshan Yellamaraju	74-64-70-73—281	-3
Takumi Kanaya	71-68-73-70—282	-2
Patrick Rodgers	72-68-69-73—282	-2
Adrien Saddier	68-71-74-69—282	-2
John VanDerLaan	68-72-70-72—282	-2
Davis Thompson	69-68-73-73—283	-1
Gary Woodland	69-71-73-70—283	-1
Max Homa	69-68-75-72—284	E
Chandler Phillips	69-68-73-74—284	E
Bud Cauley	70-71-69-75—285	+1
Hank Lebioda	70-71-71-73—285	+1
Neal Shipley	69-70-76-70—285	+1
Keita Nakajima	72-68-71-76—287	+3
Patton Kizzire	72-69-73-74—288	+4
Cameron Davis	72-68-71-80—291	+7

TRANSACTIONS

SUNDAY
BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Agreed to terms with LHP Josh Fleming on a minor league contract.
BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS — Converted the contract of G Pat Spencer to an NBA contract.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS — Assigned F Kai Uchacz to Henderson (AHL).
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Claimed F Jack Finley of waivers from the Tampa Bay Lightning.
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
ORLANDO CITY SC — Acquired D Iago Teodoro from CR Flamengo (Serie A Brazil) through the 2028-29 Major League Soccer season.

OLYMPICS

Winter Olympics Daily Medals List
SUNDAY
ALPINE
WOMEN'S DOWNHILL
CROSS COUNTRY SKIING
Breezy Johnson, United States - gold
Emma Aicher, Germany - silver
Sofia Goggia, Italy - bronze
CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING
MEN'S 10KM + 10KM SKIATHLON
Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo, Norway - gold
Mathis Desloges, France - silver
Martin Loewstroem Nyenget, Norway - bronze
BIATHLON
MIXED RELAY 4 X 6KM (M+W)
Eric Perrot, Quentin Fillon Maillet, Lou Jeanmonnot, Julia Simon, France - gold
Tommaso Giacomel, Lukas Hofer, Dorothea Wierer, Lisa Vittozzi, Italy - silver
Justus Strelow, Philipp Nawrath, Vanessa Voight, Franziska Preuss, Germany - bronze
SNOWBOARD
WOMEN'S PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM
Zuzana Maderova, Czech Republic - gold
Sabine Payer, Austria - silver
Lucia Dalmasso, Italy - bronze
MEN'S PARALLEL GIANT SLALOM
Benjamin Karl, Austria - gold
Sangkyum Kim, Korea - silver
Tervel Zamfirov, Bulgaria - bronze
SPEEDSKATING
MEN'S 5000M
Sander Eitrem, Norway - gold
Metodej Jilek, Czech Republic - silver
Riccardo Lorello, Italy - bronze
FIGURE SKATING
TEAM
Ilia Malinin, United States - gold
Shun Sato, Japan - silver
Matteo Rizzo, Italy - bronze
SATURDAY
ALPINE
MEN'S DOWNHILL
CROSS COUNTRY SKIING
Franjo von Allmen, Switzerland - gold
Giovanni Franzoni, Italy - silver
Dominik Paris, Italy - bronze
CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING
WOMEN'S 10KM + 10KM SKIATHLON
Frida Karlsson, Sweden - gold
Ebba Andersson, Sweden - silver
Heidi Weng, Norway - bronze
SPEED SKATING
WOMEN'S 3000M
Francesca Lollobrigida, Italy - gold
Ragne Wiklund, Norway - silver
Valérie Maltais, Canada - bronze
SKI JUMPING
WOMEN'S NORMAL HILL INDIVIDUAL
Anna Odine Strom, Norway - gold
Nika Prevc, Slovenia - silver
Nozomi Maruyama, Japan
SNOWBOARDING
MEN'S BIG AIR
Kira Kimura, Japan - gold
Ryoma Kimata, Japan - silver
Su Yiming, China - bronze

MLB

MLB Free Agent Signings List
NEW YORK (AP) — The 88 free agents who have signed, with name, position, former club if different, and contract. The contract information was obtained by The Associated Press from player and management sources. For players with minor league contracts, terms for major league contract base salaries are in parentheses:

AMERICAN LEAGUE
BALTIMORE (3) — Signed Ryan Helsley, rhp, New York Mets, to a $28 million, two-year contract; signed Pete Alonso, 1b, N.Y. Mets, to a $155 million, five-year contract; re-signed Zach Eflin, rhp, to a $10 million, one-year contract.
BOSTON (1) — Signed Ranger Suárez, lhp, to a $130 million, five-year contract.
CHICAGO (3) — Signed Sean Newcomb, lhp, Athletics, to a $4.5 million, one-year contract; signed Seranthony Domínguez, rhp, Toronto, to a $20 million, one-year contract; signed Austin Hays, of, Cincinnati, to a $6 million, one-year contract.
CLEVELAND (1) — Signed Shawn Armstrong, rhp, Texas, to a $5.5 million, two-year contract.
DETROIT (3) — Gleyber Torres, 2b, accepted $22,025,000 qualifying offer; signed Kenley Jansen, rhp, Los Angeles Angels, to an $11 million, one-year contract; re-signed Kyle Finnegan, rhp, to a $19 million, two-year contract.
KANSAS CITY (1) — Signed Lane Thomas, of, Cleveland, to a $5.25 million, one-year contract.
LOS ANGELES (5) — Signed Drew Pomeranz, lhp, Chicago Cubs, to a $4 million, one-year contract; signed Jordan Romano, rhp, Philadelphia, to a $2 million, one-year contract; signed Kirby Yates, rhp, Los Angeles Dodgers, to a $5 million, one-year contract; re-signed Yoán Moncada, 3b, to a $4 million, one-year contract; signed Brent Suter, lhp, Cincinnati, to a $1.25 million, one-year contract.
MINNESOTA (3) — Signed Josh Bell, 1b, Washington, to a $7 million, one-year contract; signed Victor Caratini, c, Houston, to a $14 million, two-year contract; signed Taylor Rogers, rhp, Chicago Cubs, to a $2 million, one-year contract.
NEW YORK (6) — Trent Grisham, of, accepted $22,025,000 qualifying offer; re-signed Ryan Yarbrough, lhp, to a $2.5 million, one-year contract; re-signed Amed Rosario, inf-of, to a $2.5 million, one-year contract; re-signed Paul Blackburn, rhp, to a $2 million, one-year contract; signed Paul DeJong, ss, Washington, to a minor league contract; re-signed Cody Bellinger, of-1b, to a $162.5 million, five-year contract.
SEATTLE (2) — Re-signed Josh Naylor, 1b, to a $92.5 million, five-year contract; signed Rob Refsnyder, of, Boston, to a $6.5 million, one-year contract.
TAMPA BAY (2) — Signed Cedric Mullins, of, N.Y. Mets, to a $7.5 million, one-year contract; signed Steven Matz, lhp, Boston, to a $15 million, two-year contract.
TEXAS (4) — Signed Danny Jansen, c, Milwaukee, to a $14.5 million, two-year contract; signed Tyler Alexander, lhp, Chicago White Sox, to a $1,.125,000, one-year contract; re-signed Chris Martin, rhp, to a $4 million, one-year contract; signed Jakob Junis, rhp, Cleveland, to a $4 million, one-year contract.
TORONTO (3) — Signed Dylan Cease, rhp, San Diego, to a $210 million, seven-year contract; signed Tyler Rogers, rhp, N.Y. Mets, to a $37 million, three-year contract; signed Connor Seabold, rhp, Atlanta, to a minor league contract.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
ARIZONA (6) — Re-signed James McCann, c, to a $2.75 million, one-year contract; signed Michael Soroka, rhp, Chicago Cubs, to a $7.5 million, one-year contract; signed Merrill Kelly, rhp, Texas, to a $40 million, two-year contract; re-signed Tyler Kinley, rhp, to a $4.25 million, one-year contract; signed Jonathan Loáisiga, rhp, New York Yankees, to a minor league contract; signed Derek Law, rhp, Washington, to a minor league contract.
ATLANTA (4) — Re-signed Raisel Iglesias, rhp, Atlanta, to a $16 million, one-year contract; signed Mike Yastrzemski, of, Kansas City, to a $23 million, two-year contract; signed Robert Suarez, rhp, San Diego, to a $45 million, three-year contract; re-signed Ha-Seong Kim, ss, to a $20 million, one-year contract; signed Jorge Mateo, inf-of, Baltimore, to a $1 million, one-year contract; signed Martín Pérez, lhp, Chicago White Sox, to a minor league contract.
CHICAGO (6) — Shota Imanaga, lhp, accepted $22,025,000 qualifying offer; signed Phil Maton, rhp, Texas, to a $14.5 million, two-year contract; re-signed Caleb Thielbar, lhp, to a $4.5 million, one-year contract; signed Hoby Milner, lhp, Texas, to a $3.75 million, one-year contract; signed Hunter Harvey, rhp, Kansas City, to a $6 million, one-year contract; signed Alex Bregman, 3b, Boston, to a $175 million, five-year contract.
CINCINNATI (4) — Re-signed Emilio Pagán, rhp, to a $20 million, two-year contract; signed Caleb Ferguson, lhp, Seattle, to a $4.5 million, one-year contract; signed Pierce Johnson, rhp, Atlanta, to a $6.5 million, one-year contract; signed Eugenio Suárez, 3b, Seattle, to a $15 million, one-year contract.
COLORADO (2) — Signed Michael Lorenzen, rhp, Kansas City, to an $8 million, one-year contract; signed Willi Castro, inf-of, Chicago Cubs, to a $12.8 million, two-year contract.
LOS ANGELES (3) — Re-signed Miguel Rojas, ss, to a $5.5 million, one-year contract; signed Edwin Díaz, rhp, N.Y. Mets, to a $69 million, three-year contract; signed Kyle Tucker, of, Chicago Cubs, to a $240 million, four-year contract.
MIAMI (1) — Signed Pete Fairbanks, rhp, Tampa Bay, to a $13 million, one-year contract.
MILWAUKEE (1) — Brandon Woodruff, rhp, accepted $22,025,000 qualifying offer.
NEW YORK (6) — Signed Devin Williams, rhp, New York Yankees, to a $51 million, three-year contract; signed Jorge Polanco, inf, Seattle, to a $40 million, two-year contract; signed Luke Weaver, rhp, New York Yankees, to a $22 million, two-year contract; signed Bo Bichette, inf, Toronto, to a $126 million, three-year contract; signed Luis García, rhp, Los Angeles Angels, to a $1.75 million, one-year contract; signed Craig Kimbrel, rhp, Houston, to a minor league contract.
PHILADELPHIA (5) — Re-signed Kyle Schwarber, dh-of, to a $150 million, five-year contract; signed Brad Keller, rhp, Chicago Cubs, to a $22 million, two-year contract; re-signed J.T. Realmuto, c, Philadelphia, to a $45 million, three-year contract; signed



Scott Strazzante | AP photo, San Francisco Chronicle

Byron Murphy II (91), Devon Witherspoon (21), and the Seahawks defense celebrate after Murphy recovered a fumble after a sack during the third quarter on Sunday.

Seahawks ride 'Dark Side' defense to Super Bowl title, pounding Patriots

By Rob Maaddi
AP Pro Football Writer



Adam Hunger | AP Content Services for the NFL

The Seattle Seahawks celebrate with the Lombardi Trophy after defeating the New England Patriots to win the franchise's second Super Bowl title.

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The "Dark Side" defense carried Sam Darnold and the Seattle Seahawks to a Lombardi Trophy.

Devon Witherspoon, Derick Hall, Byron Murphy and the rest of Mike Macdonald's ferocious unit pummeled Drake Maye, and the Seahawks beat the New England Patriots 29-13 on Sunday to win the franchise's second Super Bowl.

"We never waver, man. We believe in each other. We love each other, and now we're world champions," Macdonald said.

Darnold threw a touchdown pass to AJ Barner, Kenneth Walker III ran for 135 yards and Jason Myers set a Super Bowl record by making all five of his field-goal tries.

"To do this with this team, I wouldn't want it any other way," Darnold said. "So proud of our guys, our defense. I mean, I can't say enough great things about our defense, our special teams."

Walker became the first running back to win the Super Bowl MVP award since Hall of Famer Terrell Davis did it with Denver 28 years ago.

Uchenna Nwosu punctuated a punishing defensive performance by snagging Maye's pass in the air after Witherspoon hit his arm and running it back 45 yards for a pick-6.

"We went through a lot, but we believed," Witherspoon said. "All of you all doubters out there who said all that other stuff, you all don't know what's going on in this building. We're one of one over here."

Seattle won its first Super Bowl a dozen years ago behind its "Legion of Boom" defense, then was denied a repeat when New England's Malcolm Butler intercepted Russell Wilson at the goal line. The Seahawks hadn't been back to the Super Bowl since. Darnold become the first quarterback in the 2018 NFL draft class to win a Super Bowl, ahead of Josh Allen, Baker Mayfield and Lamar Jackson.

Labeled a bust, dumped by two teams and considered expendable by two others, Darnold proved his doubters wrong while helping the Seahawks go 17-3. After leading the NFL with 20 turnovers in the regular season, Darnold didn't have any in three playoff games. He wasn't particularly sharp against a solid Patriots defense but protected the ball and made enough plays, finishing 19 of 38 for 202 yards.

"I know we won the Super Bowl, but we could have been a little bit better on offense, but I don't care about that right now," Darnold said. "It's an unbelievable feeling, man. I'm just so happy for the guys in the locker room and the coaches that put in so much effort throughout the whole season."

The Seahawks sacked Maye six times, including two apiece by Hall and Murphy. Hall's strip-sack late in the third quarter set up a short field and Darnold connected with Barner on 16-yard scoring toss to make it 19-0.

Julian Love's interception set up another field goal that made it 22-7 with 5:35 left.

The Patriots (17-4) punted on the first eight drives, excluding a kneeldown to end the first half.

"Just reminding them that we're 307 days into what hopefully is a long, successful relationship and program, and it's OK to be disappointed," New England coach Mike Vrabel said.

Down 19-0, Maye and the Patriots' offense finally got going. He hit Mack Hollins over the middle in traffic for 24 yards and then lofted a perfect 35-yard TD pass to Hollins down the left side to cut the deficit to 19-7.

Tom Brady once led Bill Belichick's Patriots to the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history, when New England rallied from a 28-3 deficit against Atlanta for a 34-28 overtime victory.

But Maye, who was runner-up to Matthew Stafford for the AP NFL MVP award in the closest race in two decades, didn't come close. He had a chance to narrow the gap, but his ill-advised pass into triple coverage was picked by Love and the Patriots trailed by 15 when they got the ball back with 5:35 left.

Then came Nwosu's touchdown, a fitting way to cap an overwhelming effort by the NFL's stingiest defense.

"Definitely hurts. They played better than us tonight," Maye said.

Maye's 7-yard TD pass to Rhamondre Stevenson late in the game only made the margin smaller.

The Seahawks took a 3-0 lead on Myers' 33-yard field goal on the game's opening drive. Myers connected from 39 and 41 yards to extend the lead to 9-0 at halftime. He was good from 41 on Seattle's first drive of the third quarter to make it 12-0.

Patriots player of the game

Cornerback Christian Gonzalez made two outstanding plays to prevent potential touchdowns in the second quarter. He raced back and leaped in the air to slap away a deep pass to Rashid Shaheed that could have been a 76-yard TD.

On Seattle's last drive in the first half, Gonzalez knocked down a pass to All-Pro wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba that would have been a 23-yard TD.

Pats denied record 7th title

The Patriots failed to win the franchise's seventh Super Bowl, which would have set an NFL record. They're tied with the Steelers with six championships.

Vrabel, the AP NFL Coach of the Year, was aiming to become the fifth person to win a Super Bowl as a player and head coach and the first to do both with the same team.

The 23-year-old Maye became the QB to start a Super Bowl but couldn't become the youngest to win it. Ben Roethlisberger still holds that mark.



SEATTLE 29, NEW ENGLAND 13

Seattle	**3**	**6**	**3**	**17**	**—**	**29**
New England	**0**	**0**	**0**	**13**	**—**	**13**

First Quarter

SEA—FG Myers 33, 11:58. **Drive**: 9 plays, 51 yards, 3:02. **Key Plays**: Walker 10 run; Darnold 15 pass to Barner; Darnold 23 pass to Kupp. **Seattle 3, New England 0.**

Second Quarter

SEA—FG Myers 39, 11:16. **Drive**: 8 plays, 55 yards, 2:54. **Key Plays**: Walker 30 run; Walker 29 run. **Seattle 6, New England 0.**

SEA—FG Myers 41, :11. **Drive**: 9 plays, 34 yards, 2:39. **Key Play**: Holani 5 run on 3rd-and-2. **Seattle 9, New England 0.**

Third Quarter

SEA—FG Myers 41, 9:12. **Drive**: 10 plays, 69 yards, 4:50. **Key Plays**: Darnold 16 pass to Shaheed; Darnold 16 pass to Smith-Njigba; Darnold 11 run; Darnold 20 pass to Walker. **Seattle 12, New England 0.**

Fourth Quarter

SEA—Barner 16 pass from Darnold (Myers kick), 13:24. **Drive**: 5 plays, 37 yards, 1:46. **Key Plays**: Darnold 11 pass to Barner; Darnold 9 pass to Kupp on 3rd-and-9. **Seattle 19, New England 0.**

NE—Hollins 35 pass from Maye (Borregales kick), 12:26. **Drive**: 4 plays, 65 yards, 00:57. **Key Play**: Maye 24 pass to Hollins. **Seattle 19, New England 7.**

SEA—FG Myers 26, 5:35. **Drive**: 6 plays, 30 yards, 3:02. **Key Plays**: Love 35 interception return to New England 38; Walker 14 run; Walker 10 run; Darnold 3 pass to Smith-Njigba on 3rd-and-7. **Seattle 22, New England 7.**

SEA—Nwosu 45 interception return (Myers kick), 4:27. **Seattle 29, New England 7.**

NE—Stevenson 7 pass from Maye (pass failed), 2:21. **Drive**: 9 plays, 65 yards, 2:06. **Key Plays**: Maye 11 pass to Douglas; Maye 11 pass to Henry; Maye 26 pass to S.Diggs on 3rd-and-2. **Seattle 29, New England 13.**

A—70,823.

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	SEA	NE
FIRST DOWNS	20	18
Rushing	9	2
Passing	11	14
Penalty	0	2
THIRD DOWN EFF	4-16	6-15
FOURTH DOWN EFF	0-0	0-0
TOTAL NET YARDS	335	331
Total Plays	71	67
Avg Gain	4.7	4.9
NET YARDS RUSHING	141	79
Rushes	32	18
Avg per rush	4.406	4.389
NET YARDS PASSING	194	252
Sacked-Yds lost	1-8	6-43
Gross-Yds passing	202	295
Completed-Att.	19-38	27-43
Had Intercepted	0	2
Yards-Pass Play	4.974	5.143
KICKOFFS-EndZone-TB	8-5-3	3-1-1
PUNTS-Avg.	7-47.857	8-44.5
Punts blocked	0	0
FGs-PATs blocked	0-0	0-0
TOTAL RETURN YARDAGE	116	145
Punt Returns	2-16	2-4
Kickoff Returns	1-20	5-141
Interceptions	2-80	0-0
PENALTIES-Yds	4-25	3-25
FUMBLES-Lost	0-0	1-1
TIME OF POSSESSION	33:11	26:49

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INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Seattle, Walker 27-135, Holani 2-6, Darnold 2-5, Shaheed 1-(minus 5). New England, Maye 5-37, Stevenson 7-23, Henderson 6-19.

PASSING—Seattle, Darnold 19-38-0-202. New England, Maye 27-43-2-295.

RECEIVING—Seattle, Kupp 6-61, Barner 4-54, Smith-Njigba 4-27, Shaheed 2-27, Walker 2-26, Holani 1-7. New England, Douglas 5-45, Stevenson 5-40, Hollins 4-78, Diggs 3-37, Henry 3-31, Henderson 3-26, Hooper 2-10, Boutte 1-21, K.Williams 1-7.

PUNT RETURNS—Seattle, Shaheed 2-16. New England, Jones 2-4.

KICKOFF RETURNS—Seattle, Shaheed 1-20. New England, D.Johnson 4-103, Henderson 1-38.

TACKLES-ASSISTS-SACKS—Seattle, E.Jones 10-1-0, Jobe 6-1-0, Emmanwori 4-1-0, Witherspoon 4-0-1, Woolen 4-0-0, Bryant 3-1-0, D.Thomas 2-3-0, Love 2-1-0, D.Hall 2-0-2, Murphy 2-0-2, Lawrence 1-1-0, Mills 1-0-1, Mafe 1-0-0, Reed 0-2-0, Williams 0-1-0. New England, Woodson 7-3-0, Jones 7-0-0, Davis 5-1-0, A.Jennings 4-2-0, Hawkins 4-1-0, Gonzalez 4-0-0, Gibbens 3-1-0, Barmore 2-1-0, M.Williams 2-0-1, Spillane 1-3-0, Elliss 1-2-0, Chaisson 1-0-0, Landry 1-0-0, Durden 0-1-0, Pettus 0-1-0, Tavai 0-1-0, Taylor 0-1-0, Tonga 0-1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS—Seattle, Nwosu 1-45, Love 1-35. New England, None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

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OFFICIALS—Referee Shawn Smith, Ump Roy Ellison, HL Dana McKenzie, LJ Julian Mapp, FJ Jason Ledet, SJ Eugene Hall, BJ Greg Steed, Replay Andrew Lambert.

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Doug Benc | AP photo

Seahawks running back Kenneth Walker III (9) took over as the full-time option in the backfield because of an injury to Zach Charbonnet, and he delivered in the postseason.

Walker becomes first RB Super Bowl MVP in 28 years

By Josh Dubow
AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Kenneth Walker III is running into free agency with a Super Bowl MVP.

Walker capped a prolific postseason with another big performance on the ground to help the Seattle Seahawks beat the New England Patriots 29-13 Sunday night for a championship.

While the defense carried Seattle for much of the postseason, Walker was once again the engine of the offense by rushing for 135 yards and adding 26 receiving for his third straight 100-yard game from scrimmage in the postseason. He became the first running back since Terrell Davis 28 years ago to win Super Bowl MVP.

Walker stepped up his game after backfield mate Zach Charbonnet went down with a season-ending knee injury and it couldn't have come at a more important time for the Seahawks or a more opportune time for Walker.

The 25-year-old running back is in the final year of his rookie contract and is slated to become a free agent in 2026.

Thanks to his playoff run, Walker figures to be in line for a significant pay bump.

Walker gained 413 yards from scrimmage in the three wins for Seattle this postseason. He became the first player to top 100 yards from scrimmage in every playoff game for a Super Bowl champion since Terrell Davis did it in back-to-back seasons in 1997-98 for the Broncos.

While fantasy football owners and Walker were sometimes frustrated that he didn't carry a bigger load of the offense, especially in the red zone, in the regular season, the job share with Charbonnet did mean Walker was fresh for the playoffs when he was at his best.

Walker averaged less than 15 touches from scrimmage per game in the regular season when he delivered his first 1,000-yard rushing season since his rookie year.

But he averaged nearly 25 touches per game in the playoffs when he showed he's capable of being a bell-cow back.

Walker started fast with a 10-yard run on the opening snap and had 55 yards in the ground on a field-goal drive later in the first half for the most by any player on one drive in the Super Bowl in 20 years.

Revival continues for QB Darnold

The Associated Press



Charlie Riedel | AP photo

Seahawks quarterback Sam Darnold (14) faced plenty of pressure but threw a fourth-quarter touchdown and didn't turn the ball over en route to a Super Bowl victory.

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — How fitting that Sam Darnold delivered the capstone of his topsy-turvy NFL career in the very same place where he recently revived it.

On the sideline of Levi's Stadium two seasons ago, Darnold patiently paid his dues behind Brock Purdy as San Francisco's backup quarterback and soaked up every ounce of knowledge he could from the coaches.

Back in the Bay Area on Sunday and beneath the bright lights, Darnold became a Super Bowl champion in his first year under center for the Seattle Seahawks — his fifth team in eight seasons.

Seattle captured the franchise's second Lombardi Trophy with a dominant 29-13 victory over the New England Patriots. Darnold even dressed in the same locker room Sunday where he once roamed with the 49ers, then took the field and completed 19 of 38 passes for 202 yards and a touchdown.

The 28-year-old Darnold now has an NFL title to his name, and that should be plenty to prove he belongs among the NFL's elite quarterbacks after a much-criticized beginning to his professional career.

He hung tough for the Seahawks this season through the ups and downs, time and again. Just as he had done so many times before while facing the doubters who largely considered him a bust.

That forgettable, four-interception game in a 21-19 Week 11 road loss to the Rams in mid-November seems so long ago now. Darnold's teammates stuck by him, and he used that day as fuel to be better: beating the Rams the next two meetings, rallying his team to a 38-37 overtime victory Dec. 18 before a 31-27 triumph in the NFC championship game last month.

Darnold credited that time with San Francisco playing in coach Kyle Shanahan's offense while learning from Purdy as crucial to reviving his career, then he produced a breakout year with Minnesota last season before heading off to the Pacific Northwest.

Darnold started one game in 2023 for the 49ers and appeared in 10, throwing 46 total passes with 28 completions and a pair of touchdowns. He cherished the guidance he received from quarterbacks coach Brian Griese, an 11-year NFL veteran himself. It has been quite a journey for Darnold to find his footing in the pros after being drafted third overall by the New York Jets in the first round of the 2018 draft out of USC.

He had a 13-25 record and a 78.6 passer rating over his initial three seasons for the Jets — the second worst in the league among 43 quarterbacks with at least 15 starts from 2018-20.

Darnold played for a bit without star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who returned after being taken to the locker room in the third quarter to be evaluated for a concussion. Smith-Njigba, the AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year, appeared to get banged up when he was tackled by New England cornerback Marcus Jones on a four-yard completion midway through the third. After the game, Smith-Njigba said he was fine when asked about his head.

"Man," Smith-Njigba said, "I'm on cloud nine right now."

The injury came during a quiet night for Smith-Njigba. The NFL's leader in yards receiving during the regular season had three catches for 24 yards when he left the field. Smith-Njigba finished the evening with four catches for 27 yards and no TDs.

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Patriots' Maye hounded into 3 turnovers in loss

By Kyle Hightower
AP Sports Writer



Adam Hunger | AP photo, AP Content Services for the NFL

Seahawks cornerback Devon Witherspoon (21) blasts Patriots quarterback Drake Maye (10) into an interception that was returned for a touchdown.

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Drake Maye was a dependable and steadying force for the New England Patriots this season. The second-year quarterback never got the chance to be that when his team needed him most in the Super Bowl.

Maye was the NFL's most accurate passer during the regular season and finished second in MVP voting, but he was hounded by the Seahawks' "Dark Side" defense throughout. He threw two touchdown passes, but was sacked six times, had two interceptions and lost a fumble that led to a TD by Seattle in New England's 29-13 loss on Sunday.

"Definitely hurts," Maye said. "They played better than us tonight."

It was a humbling end for a team that seemed poised to recapture a little of the magic of the Patriots' run of six championships over two decades. Instead, Maye sat after the game with his head down, in grass-stained pants and tears welling in his eyes.

"Family travel all this way to watch us play. Don't ruin their night. Because it sucks and it hurts," Maye said.

Maye finished 27 of 43 for 295 yards and there were few highlights before he and the Patriots finally found some traction in the third quarter. Left tackle Will Campbell gave up two of the sacks on Maye as the Seahawks sent several blitzes to his side of the line.

According to Next Gen Stats, Campbell allowed 14 pressures, the most allowed by any NFL player in a game this season. But Vrabel said no one performance was responsible for the offense's lack of production.

"We can sit here and try to put in on one guy. You'll be disappointed because that will never happen," Vrabel said. "It starts with us as a coaching staff. ... That's never going to change."

Trailing 19-0 after his fumble set up a touchdown pass by Sam Darnold, Maye finally got some time to operate in the pocket and threw a 35-yard TD pass to Mack Hollins.

It brought some life to the Patriots' sideline.

But it was short-lived.

Maye's pass intended for Kyle Williams was picked off by Julian Love. The Seahawks added Jason Myers' fifth field goal on their ensuing drive.

Down 22-7, New England's fate was basically sealed when Maye was picked off by Uchenna Nwosu, who returned it 45 yards for a score.

The Patriots, who came in averaging 18 points per game in the playoffs, were held to 331 total yards.

New England was denied a seventh Lombardi Trophy, which would have broken a tie with the Pittsburgh Steelers for the most in NFL history. It was a thudding end to a Cinderella-like season for the Patriots, who finished the regular season 14-3 in coach Mike Vrabel's first season — which came off back-to-back 4-13 finishes.

"Part of our identity is not being a front-runner," Vrabel said. "Just like every year, somebody's gonna lose this game, and we have to remember what it feels like."

The Patriots fell into a 12-0 halftime hole and punted on eight of their first nine drives. It would have been seven straight, but the final one of the first half was a one-play kneel down.

The 51 total yards gained by the Patriots were the fewest in a first half in the last 35 Super Bowls.

"We couldn't gain any rhythm, any field position," Vrabel said. "Defensively, we were really good against the run and we weren't. We were just playing catch-up."

It also marked the fifth Super Bowl without a touchdown in the first half. Maye also became first player to be sacked three times on the first four drives of a Super Bowl since Tom Brady in Super Bowl 42 against the New York Giants.

One of the reasons Seattle's defense was so effective was it did a great job of keeping New England's offense in long yardage situations on third down. The Patriots had to negotiate third downs of 9, 15, 17, 7 and 12 yards in the first half. They were only 2 of 7 on conversions in the first half.

The most emotion Maye displayed afterward was in thinking about the shortcoming of a group that won't be the same next season.

"Had that sink in right now. Hopefully a lot of the same faces are here. The nature of the business I know it won't be like that," Maye said, his voice cracking.

"But, this team was awesome."

Seattle's Kubiak set to take over Raiders

By Mark Anderson
AP Sports Writer



Brynn Anderson | AP photo

Seahawks offensive coordinator Klint Kubiak will receive his Super Bowl ring in Las Vegas as he prepares to officially take over as Raiders coach.

Seahawks offensive coordinator Klint Kubiak confirmed he will be the next Las Vegas Raiders head coach during an on-field interview Sunday night following Seattle's 29-13 victory over New England in the Super Bowl.

"You guys know I'm going to Las Vegas," Kubiak told NFL Network. "I'm fired up about it. Hell yeah, I'm going. Of course, I'm going."

Kubiak and the Raiders began working toward finalizing an agreement a week ago for him to take the job, a person with knowledge of the discussions said at the time.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no contract was in place and no announcement could be made until after the Super Bowl in Santa Clara, California.

Just after the Super Bowl, as it turned out.

The 38-year-old Kubiak will be the third coach in three seasons for the Raiders and fifth full-time leader since they moved to Las Vegas in 2020. He succeeds Pete Carroll, who went 3-14 in one season in Las Vegas after a storied run with Seattle that included two Super Bowl appearances and one championship.

Kubiak likely will be counted on to mold Fernando Mendoza, who led Indiana to the national championship, into the franchise quarterback the organization has long sought. The Raiders own the top pick in this year's draft, and they are expected to use that selection on the Heisman Trophy winner.

The front office has more than $91 million in salary cap space to surround Mendoza with talent, the second-highest amount in the league, according to overthecap.com.

It was Kubiak's work with Sam Darnold that got the Raiders' attention. Darnold, taken third overall by the New York Jets in the 2018 NFL draft, had been considered a bust until leading Minnesota to a 14-win season in 2024. But the Vikings moved on from Darnold, and he proved that season was no fluke, winning 14 games in the regular season with Seattle and three more in the playoffs to hoist the Lombardi Trophy.

Kubiak's father, Gary, coached Denver to the Super Bowl title in the 2015 seasons, and he played quarterback for the Broncos from 1983-91. Gary and Klint Kubiak will be the 10th father-son pair to serve as NFL head coaches, including interim coaches.

Kubiak also has two brothers who are on staffs of other NFL teams — Klay with San Francisco and Klein with Dallas. Klay Kubiak, the 49ers' offensive coordinator, also interviewed with the Raiders.

The Raiders have been searching for a path back to their glory days. Three Lombardi Trophies sit in the team's facility, but the Raiders haven't won a playoff game since their last Super Bowl appearance in the 2002 season. They have made the postseason just twice since then, most recently in the 2021 season.

Celebs share the spotlight

The Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Stars were front-and-center at Super Bowl 60, with Chris Pratt and Jon Bon Jovi introducing the teams, a series of soaring pre-game performances and Bad Bunny's much-anticipated halftime show featuruing a tour of Puerto Rican culture and a real-life marriage.

Before the game at Levi's Stadium, Blue Ivy Carter and her sister Rumi leaped in an end zone and Green Day delievered a tribute to the NFL championship game's 60th anniversary.

Brandi Carlile kept it sincere and simple for "America, the Beautiful," Charlie Puth made "The Star-Spangled Banner" big and soulful and Coco Jones brought a bit of the elements of both to "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Bad Bunny recreates Puerto Rico in Northern California

Bad Bunny brought Lady Gaga, Ricky Martin and a whole lot of his native Puerto Rico to his halftime show.

"God bless America!" he shouted toward the end, one of the only English phrases in the 13-minute halftime show. Then he gave a roll call of the nations of North, South and Central America, including Uruguay, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, the United States and Canada. A parade of flags from those nations marched through the sugar plantation fields that functioned as the show's centerpiece. After the list of nations, and at the end of the show, he declared, "Mi Patria Puerto Rico, seguimos aquí," or "My homeland Puerto Rico, we are still here."

He also brought out a parade of celebrities, including Cardi B, Jessica Alba and Pedro Pascal.

The 31-year-old began the performance in the furrows of the faux sugar cane crops, walking past unmistakable Puerto Rican imagery including farmers in straw hats, old men playing dominos and a shaved ice stand as he performed his 2022 reggaeton hit "Tití Me Preguntó." He carried a football and wore an all-white football jersey with the number 64 and his real last name, Ocasio.

He then stood atop a tiny pink house with dancers in the front yard and performed "Yo Perreo Sola" and stood atop a pickup truck as he did "EOO."

The scene shifted to a wedding, where the marrying couple parted to reveal Lady Gaga as the first surprise guest. She joined Bad Bunny in performing "Baile Inolvidable." Gaga did her own Super Bowl halftime show in 2017. The couple was actually married during the show, according to a representative for Bad Bunny, who said he served as a witness and signed their marriage certificate.

On Truth Social, President Donald Trump called the show "absolutely terrible, one of the worst, EVER!"





Vonn breaks leg in downhill crash, ending her run

By Andrew Dampf and Pat Graham
AP Sports Writers



Jacquelyn Martin | AP photos

Competing with a ruptured ACL suffered recently during a World Cup race, Lindsey Vonn suffered another crash on Sunday that required her to be airlifted off the slopes, potentially ending the career of the American icon.

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy — Lindsey Vonn's defiant bid to win the Winter Olympic downhill at the age of 41, on a rebuilt right knee and a badly injured left knee, ended Sunday in a frightening crash that left her with a broken leg and saw her taken to safety by a rescue helicopter for the second time in nine days.

Vonn lost control within moments of leaving the start house, clipping a gate with her right shoulder and pinwheeling down the slope before ending up awkwardly on her back, her skis crisscrossed below her and her screams ringing out soon after medical personnel arrived. She was treated for long, anguished minutes as a hush fell over the crowd waiting far below at the finish line.

She was strapped to a gurney and flown away, possibly ending the skier's storied career. She was taken to a clinic in Cortina, then transferred to a larger hospital in Treviso, a two-hour drive to the south.

She was being "treated by a multidisciplinary team" and "underwent an orthopedic operation to stabilize a fracture reported in her left leg," the Ca' Foncello hospital said in a statement. The U.S. Ski Team said Vonn was "in stable condition and in good hands with a team of American and Italian physicians."

"She'll be OK, but it's going to be a bit of a process," said Anouk Patty, chief of sport for U.S. Ski and Snowboard. "This sport's brutal and people need to remember when they're watching (that) these athletes are throwing themselves down a mountain and going really, really fast."

Breezy Johnson, Vonn's teammate, became only the second American woman to win the Olympic downhill after Vonn did it 16 years ago. The 30-year-old Johnson held off Emma Aicher of Germany and Italy's Sofia Goggia on a bittersweet day for the team.

"I don't claim to know what she's going through, but I do know what it is to be here, to be fighting for the Olympics, and to have this course burn you and to watch those dreams die," said Johnson, whose injury in Cortina in 2022 ruined her hopes of skiing in the Beijing Olympics. "I can't imagine the pain that she's going through and it's not the physical pain — we can deal with physical pain — but the emotional pain is something else."

Vonn had family in the stands, including her father, Alan Kildow, who stared down at the ground while his daughter was being treated after just 13 seconds on the course where she holds a record 12 World Cup titles. Others in the crowd, including rapper Snoop Dogg, watched quietly as the star skier was finally taken off the course. Fellow American star Mikaela Shiffrin posted a broken heart emoji on social media.

Vonn's crash was "tragic, but it's ski racing," said Johan Eliasch, president of the International Ski and Snowboard Federation.

"I can only say thank you for what she has done for our sport," he said, "because this race has been the talk of the Games and it's put our sport in the best possible light."

All eyes had been on Vonn, the feel-good story heading into the Olympics. She returned to elite ski racing last season after nearly six years, a remarkable decision given her age but she also had a partial titanium knee replacement in her right knee, too. Many wondered how she would fare as she sought a gold medal to join the one she won in the downhill at the 2010 Vancouver Games.

The four-time overall World Cup champion stunned everyone by being a contender almost immediately. She came to the Olympics as the leader in the World Cup downhill standings and was a gold-medal favorite before her crash in Switzerland nine days ago, when she suffered her latest knee injury. In addition to a ruptured ACL, she also had a bone bruise and meniscus damage.

Still, no one counted her out even then. In truth, she has skied through injuries for three decades at the top of the sport. In 2006, ahead of the Turin Olympics, Vonn took a bad fall during downhill training and went to the hospital. She competed less than 48 hours later, racing in all four events she'd planned, with a top result of seventh in the super-G.

Cortina has had many treasured memories for Vonn beyond the record wins. She is called the queen of Cortina, and the Olympia delle Tofana is a course that had always suited Vonn. She tested out the knee twice in downhill training runs over the past three days before Sunday's crash in clear, sunny conditions.

"This would be the best comeback I've done so far," Vonn said before the race. "Definitely the most dramatic."

The drama was of a different sort this time. Not since perhaps Hermann Maier's cartwheeling crash at the 1998 Nagano Games had there been such a high-profile and spectacular fall in Alpine skiing at the Olympics.

"Dear Lindsey, we're all thinking of you. You are an incredible inspiration, and will always be an Olympic champion," International Olympic Committee president Kirsty Coventry said.

Malinin's stunning free skate secures US team gold

By Dave Skretta
AP Sports Writer



Natacha Pisarenko | AP photo

Ilia Malinin of the United States competes during the figure skating men's team event at the 2026 Winter Olympics on Sunday.

MILAN — It seemed only fitting that Ilia Malinin was the first one to get his Olympic gold medal after the U.S. successfully defended its team title by holding off the Japanese on Sunday night in the three-day competition at the Milan Cortina Games.

After all, everything came down to him in the end.

With the teams tied after seven of eight performances, Malinin calmly delivered for the Americans. The 21-year-old nicknamed the "Quad God" landed five quadruple jumps and scored 200.03 points for his free skate, atoning for a mediocre short program — at least by his lofty standards — one night earlier. That was enough to beat Japanese sensation Shun Sato, who followed him to the ice, hit a trio of quads of his own, but could only manage 194.86 points in finishing second.

The U.S. finished with 69 points while Japan had 68, earning the silver medal for the second consecutive Olympics.

"I was like, 'OK, I'm the deciding factor,'" Malinin said later, after the U.S. got the medal ceremony it was denied at the Beijing Games, when Russian doping held up their awards for more than two years. "'I need to just, you know, do what I need to do.'"

Malinin does it better than anyone in the world.

Matteo Rizzo delivered one of the best free skates of his career as Italy was trying to hold onto the bronze medal, allowing the host nation to finish third with 60 points. Georgia was fourth with 56 and still has never won a Winter Olympics medal.

The U.S. had a five-point lead over Japan after two days of competition. But the advantage dwindled to nothing when world champions Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara won the pairs free skate and Kaori Sakamoto won the women's free skate earlier Sunday night.

Leave it to the best closer in the business to come through for the Americans.

Malinin opened with a big quad flip, opted for a safer triple axel over his quad, and overcame a couple of mistakes along the way to finish with aplomb. The son of Olympic skaters Tatiana Malinina and Roman Skorniakov ended with back-to-back combos, a quad toe-triple flip and a quad salchow-triple axel, leaving a crowd full of American and Japanese fans roaring in approval.

"I knew that it was going to be a tiebreaker between the men's event," Malinin said, "so I really just went straight into this, and just went for it. It went exactly the way I wanted, the way I planned. And you know, I'm so thankful for that."

It wasn't quite over yet. Sato did everything he could to give Japan a chance.

From his opening quad lutz to his finishing triple lutz, Sato was nearly perfect, producing an easier but cleaner program than Malinin had earlier. He pumped his fist the moment his music ended, then had to wait to hear whether it was enough.

It wasn't quite.

"I didn't really think about whether or not I could beat Ilia," Sato said through a translator, "but I definitely wanted to do it."

The pairs were first on the ice Sunday night, and Ellie Kam and Danny O'Shea put out the best free skate of their pairs career when the U.S. needed it the most, beating the Canadians to avoid dropping a much-needed point to the winning Japanese pairs team.

That point ended up being the margin of victory in the end.

Kam and O'Shea scored 135.36 points for their program, which opened with "Sweet Dreams" by the Eurythmics and finished with "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" by Tears for Fears. Miura and Kihara won the segment with a career-best of their own of 155.55 points, pulling the Japanese within two points of the Americans with two events remaining.

"We couldn't be more proud to be able to perform under what we felt was so much energy," said the 34-year-old O'Shea, who was an Olympic alternate in 2018 but is making his debut at the Winter Games. "We walked into the day, walked into the rink with positive emotions, with an offensive attitude, and that showed out there on the ice."

Then the women took the stage with the U.S. swapping out world champion Alysa Liu for Amber Glenn.

The three-time national champion spun out of her opening triple axel, the most difficult triple jump and one only she tried among the women, and Glenn had to add a late double toe loop after missing an earlier triple as part of a combination. Those two mistakes, and a couple of other errors along the way, left her with 138.62 points — and more crucially, third in the segment.

Kaori Sakamoto, the individual bronze medalist at the Beijing Games, won the free skate with 148.62 points, pulling Japan into a tie for the lead. Anastasiia Gubanova took second in the free skate as she tried to keep Georgia in the race for bronze.

US coach Sullivan tight-lipped about his plan in Italy

By Stephen Whyno
AP Hockey Writer



Carolyn Kaster | AP photo

Former Wilkes-Barre/Scranton and Pittsburgh Penguins coach Mike Sullivan is at the helm for Team USA at the Olympics, with the team holding its first practice on Sunday.

MILAN — Mike Sullivan wanted his players to get their blood moving, break out a sweat and adjust to a new time zone with most of them fresh off flying across the Atlantic Ocean. He did not want anyone to read much else in to the first U.S. practice at the Olympics.

Sullivan on Sunday would not name his starting goaltender for the tournament opener and explained that not running forward lines or defense pairings was "by design." With plenty of time until the puck drops Thursday against Latvia, the two-time Stanley Cup-winning coach is more than content to keep everyone guessing.

"We'll see how it goes," Sullivan said. "We have an idea of what we want to start with, and that will start to unfold here over the next couple of days."

The Americans' biggest strength may be in net. Connor Hellebuyck is the reigning NHL MVP, Jake Oettinger is a tried and true playoff performer and Jeremy Swayman may be having the best season of the three.

Hellebuyck was the No. 1 goalie at the 4 Nations Face-Off a year ago, when the U.S. reached the final before losing to Canada in overtime, but it's no sure bet he has the job in Milan.

"At the end of the day, performance will inevitably be the dictator," Sullivan said. "In a tournament like this, it has to be. And so, we have an idea going in of how we want to go about it and how we want to approach it and we'll go from there."

Hellebuyck brushed off any concern about the uncertainty, saying, "We'll know soon enough." Swayman sounded excited about the chance to earn a start after not making an appearance at the 4 Nations.

"That's our job, baby: Make it hard for them," Swayman said. "We want that. We want that high competitive environment, and I think it's only going to raise our own level as well as the team's level."

The U.S. blue line is also stacked, even after losing defenseman Seth Jones to injury. Quinn Hughes, who won the Norris Trophy as the league's top player at the position last season and is thriving since a trade to Minnesota, could easily play with Wild defense partner Brock Faber or Boston's Charlie McAvoy.

Perhaps the coaching staff decides to keep Hughes and Faber together, at least to begin the preliminary round.

"We may very well do that," Sullivan said. "We'll see how it goes. We have an idea of what we're going to do and how we're going to go about it."

The intrigue continues up front, where the initial indication was that Jack Eichel would center brothers Brady and Matthew Tkachuk, with Auston Matthews between Jake Guentzel and Matt Boldy. Tkachuk-Eichel-Tkachuk was arguably the best U.S. line last year in the tournament against Canada, Sweden and Finland.

"If we were to choose to go that route, the appeal would be they were terrific at the 4 Nations event," Sullivan said. "We have a game plan on what we're going to do going into this tournament."

Canada took a different approach, holding a longer practice and rolling out lines that included Connor McDavid centering Macklin Celebrini and Tom Wilson, Sidney Crosby between Mitch Marner and Mark Stone and Nathan MacKinnon with Brad Marchand and Nick Suzuki.

"A lot of preparation went into this about who's going to play with who and what works and what doesn't," coach Jon Cooper said. "It's never like a situation where you're pointing a finger saying, 'Oh, I want to play with this guy.' Nobody does that. But what helps them? ... Ultimately, you have to start somewhere."

NHL PLAYERS ARRIVE

Lukas Dostal was in a rush to get to the Olympics. Earlier this week, the Czech goaltender became the first NHL player to take the ice for practice with his national team.

"What would I do in Anaheim, shoot the puck to the boards and try to stop it myself? It probably wouldn't really work," Dostal said.

He is no longer alone, as the rest of the players from the best hockey league in the world arrived in Milan on Sunday. Fresh off flying from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, the top contenders from the U.S. and Canada to Sweden, Finland and Czechia all took the ice for their first practices at the Olympics.

"It's crazy to think about now we're here," said Matthews, who was named U.S. captain after practice. "It definitely hits you once you touch down and get to the Olympic village and get settled in, just how special and cool it is to be here."

Dostal and about a dozen others arranged transportation to get to Italy a couple of days earlier, including Canada's Connor McDavid, Germany's Leon Draisaitl, Czechia's David Pastrnak and a quartet of Americans.

Zach Werenski, McAvoy, Oettinger and Swayman marched in the opening ceremony with the rest of the U.S. delegation at San Siro stadium, as did Switzerland's Nico Hischier, Timo Meier and Jonas Siegenthaler. Swayman called taking part "an out of body experience."

Draisaitl and Pastrnak were among the seven men's hockey players who served as their nation's flag bearer.

"As a little boy, your biggest dream is playing in the Olympic Games," said Switzerland's Nino Niederreiter, who was his country's flag bearer. "Being able to go out there and carry the flag was definitely something you'll never forget and cherish forever."

Almost all the players and coaches experiencing the newly built arena gave it rave reviews, though the joy of finally getting to the Olympics almost certainly contributed to that rosy first impression.

"Great, honestly," Sweden forward Mika Zibanejad said. "I don't have anything negative to say. I've been just so stoked to be able to be part of Olympics."

There's a reason for that. This is the first Olympics with NHL players in a dozen years, dating to Sochi in 2014, after the league opted not to participate in 2018 and pandemic-related scheduling issues caused an eleventh-hour change of plans in 2022.

That gap means an entire generation of stars, including McDavid, MacKinnon, Matthews and Eichel, have never represented their country on this international stage.

This is the first so-called best-on-best tournament since the 2016 World Cup of Hockey, but even that had a couple of made-up teams — North Americans 23-and-under and then Europeans from various countries not included — to keep McDavid and MacKinnon from playing with two-time gold medalists Crosby, Drew Doughty and others.

The talk about doing so became reality skating on Sunday.

"Landing today and kind of going through the whole experience, getting checked into the village, it definitely feels real now," Eichel said. "I think we're all really excited to be here."

Following weeks, if not months, of concerns about the quality of the ice, it was clear the surface wasn't perfect. But it'll more than do given the circumstances.

"The ice was a little bit beat up when we were practicing today, but there have been a lot of teams on it," Sullivan said. "At the end of the day, both teams got to play on the same surface, so we're thrilled to be here and we love every minute of it."

Canada was the final team to practice, going on just after 7 p.m. local time, and the thrill had not worn off for anyone yet.

"Playing with Connor McDavid is a thrill, walking into the athletes' village is a thrill, meeting other athletes and hanging out is a thrill, putting on this jersey is a thrill," said Canada's Wilson. "This whole experience is a thrill."

Games begin Wednesday, and the U.S. and Canada open the tournament Thursday, so teams have a little bit of time to coalesce on and off the ice. But first, all the travel means the need for some rest.

"It feels like it's been a long day," U.S. forward Jack Hughes said. "Really exciting to finally get over here and just be a part of it."

Sweden women continue surge behind Johansson

By John Wawrow
AP Hockey Writer

MILAN — At 19, Hilda Svensson wasn't born the last time Sweden's women's hockey team medaled at the Olympics.

The Ohio State freshman and a collection of young and brashly confident teammates are eager to rectify what's been a 20-year drought at the Milan Cortina Games.

"I think we have a good chance," Svensson said after setting up two goals in a 4-0 win over France on Sunday.

"I think we have one of the best teams now since then. And we have a really good energy," she added. "Everyone on this team wants to take that medal. And I think everyone's going to work very hard for that."

One step at a time.

Improving to 3-0, Sweden earned a berth in the quarterfinal round and is one win — or a loss by Japan (1-1) — from clinching Group B. The next challenge is more daunting, with Sweden having to win two more games to medal in a tournament in which the U.S. entered as favorites, followed by defending Olympic champion Canada, Finland and Czechia.

Difficult as the road ahead appears, Svensson's outlook reflects a transformational shift in the program's trajectory. The core of Sweden's roster is made up of players who won silver at the 2018 U-18 championships.

"I really like how they're not afraid to lose," 31-year-old captain Anna Kjellbin said of the youngsters. "They just see possibilities to win all the time. And I think that's one of the strengths of that generation."

Sweden's roster features eight players 22 and younger, with seven currently competing at U.S. colleges. They include Svensson, who is tied for seventh in the nation with 44 points (15 goals, 29 assists) in 26 games.

Against France, Minnesota-Duluth senior forward Thea Johansson scored her Olympic tournament-leading fourth goal. Also scoring were Sara Hjalmarsson, Hanna Thuvik and Lisa Johansson. Emma Soderberg stopped 14 shots for her first Olympic shutout in six games.

France dropped to 0-3 in its Olympic debut, and is in jeopardy of not qualifying for the quarterfinals. Only the top three of five Group B nations advance. Alice Philbert had 45 saves in a game the Swedes outshot France 49-14.

Sweden has so far played to its high expectations by outscoring opponents by a combined margin of 14-1. The team has finished no better than seventh at the past two Olympics after finishing fourth at the 2014 Sochi Games.

The drop-off has been dramatic for the only nation other than Canada and the U.S. to win an Olympic silver medal. The Swedes did so at the 2006 Turin Games by upsetting the Americans in the semifinals. Sweden also won bronze in 2002.

"The time for us is now," coach Ulf Lundberg declared before the tournament opened. He based that on what he called a "we don't care" attitude his players have adopted.

"You have those youngsters coming in and they're not afraid of anything. I love it," Lundberg said. "We want to be more like the Canadians and the Americans that feel that we are best, because then you have the grace and the swag."

Lundberg has been part of the transformation. He took over the women's team after playing a role in developing several Swedish men's stars, including Buffalo Sabres defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, the No. 1 pick in the 2018 draft.

Encouraged as he is, Lundberg is not looking beyond Sweden closing its preliminary round schedule against Japan on Tuesday.

"We're not looking or listening to media talking about maybe semifinal, maybe medal, maybe 2006 again," Lundberg said. "Slow down. Here and now."

CZECHIA BEATS FINLAND

Tereza Pistekova and Natalie Mlynkova scored, Klara Peslarova stopped 25 shots and Czechia defeated Finland 2-0 in what could serve as a preview of the tournament's bronze-medal matchup.

Anni Kiesala stopped 22 shots for Finland, which has been blanked twice in two outings following a 5-0 loss to the Americans a day earlier. Czechia is 1-2.

It was the nations' first meeting in Olympic play, though they've developed a fierce rivalry at the world championships. The teams have won two bronze medals apiece over the past four world tournaments, with Finland winning the past two — both decided after regulation.

Ledecka's quest for Olympic three-peat comes to halt

By Eddie Pells and Joseph Wilson
The Associated Press



Abbie Parr | AP photo

Ester Ledecka reacts after finishing behind Austria's Sabine Payer during the women's snowboarding parallel giant slalom finals on Sunday.

LIVIGNO, Italy — The fans from the Czech Republic clanged cowbells and waved their red-white-and-blue tricolor for a sun-splashed Olympic victory they simply knew was coming.

Then, they all looked down and checked their programs.

Their favorite speed racer, Ester Ledecka, her quest for a third straight title vanquished early, was a mere spectator Sunday when another Czech, eight years younger and without a single big-time win in her career, zoomed across the line to keep the gold medal in snowboarding's parallel giant slalom safely in the republic.

Her name: Zuzana Maderova.

"I can't believe it now," the 22-year-old said, "but I'm an Olympic champion."

A few hours after Lindsey Vonn wiped out on an Alpine downhill course a mountain range away in Cortina D'Ampezzo, Ledecka — and Maderova — reinforced the obvious to the Winter Olympic world: There are no sure things when these racers hit the slippery ice and snow.

"Suddenly, I made a mistake in the quarterfinals," said Ledecka, who skittered and put her hand down at the sixth gate in the quarterfinal, costing her precious time and a chance at another title. "I did my best. It's what can happen in this sport."

Her country's president, Petr Pavel, came to Livigno expecting to celebrate a win. It was a good bet. Ledecka hadn't lost a PGS race in nearly two years or missed a podium in five.

But after the second round (quarterfinals) of head-to-head action in a single-elimination format, she was only a bystander.

Her opponent, Sabine Payer of Austria, won the quarterfinal by 0.06 seconds.

Asked what she would've done differently, Ledecka focused on her form.

"I would do the toe side much better. I would probably put my inner shoulder up and do it better," she said.

Ledecka first shocked the Olympic world eight years ago when she became the first athlete to win gold medals in both a skiing and a snowboarding event. Even she didn't quite believe she had won the ski race. Nobody was surprised about the snowboarding.

She has been splitting time ever since — she'll head to Cortina for a super-G race next Thursday. But in deciphering the reasons for this shocking loss, her coach, Justin Reiter, said her nine ski races versus one in snowboarding in the leadup to Milan Cortina wasn't that big a factor.

"I take the responsibility there, maybe not being as prepared as we could've been," he told The Associated Press. "Adapting her training a little bit. ... She has so much more in the tank. She can ride so much faster. But she didn't gear up. She geared down."

There were no such regrets from Maderova, and certainly not from Payer, who raced her way to the silver medal. She lost to Maderova by 0.83 seconds in the final, but will go down as the woman who took down this sport's GOAT.

"The win against Ester, I think it was not expected, I would say," Payer said. "I knew I had to risk everything and go all-in. Mistakes can happen. I think she might have helped me a bit. I don't know how her run was, but I'm really, really happy."

Ledecka's loss now gives Austria's Anna Gasser a chance to become the first snowboarder to win three straight Olympic titles. Gasser takes the hill in big air qualifying later Sunday. Also trying for a three-peat is Chloe Kim. Her halfpipe contest starts Wednesday.

Austrian Benjamin Karl gets a repeat, and PGS awaits to hear its future

The only repeat on this day belonged to Austria's Benjamin Karl, who won his second straight title, then celebrated by stripping off his shirt, doing a huge weightlifter flex, then falling, bare-chested, into the snow.

The 40-year-old Karl, who also has a silver and a bronze in his career, said that belly flop was a tribute to alpine skiing legend Hermann Maier. It was pure joy to cool off with the mountain sun beating down.

"We have four runs, it was really long, we are sweating full gas — it's like you're coming out from the sauna," he said. "I wanted to lay longer in the snow to cool down."

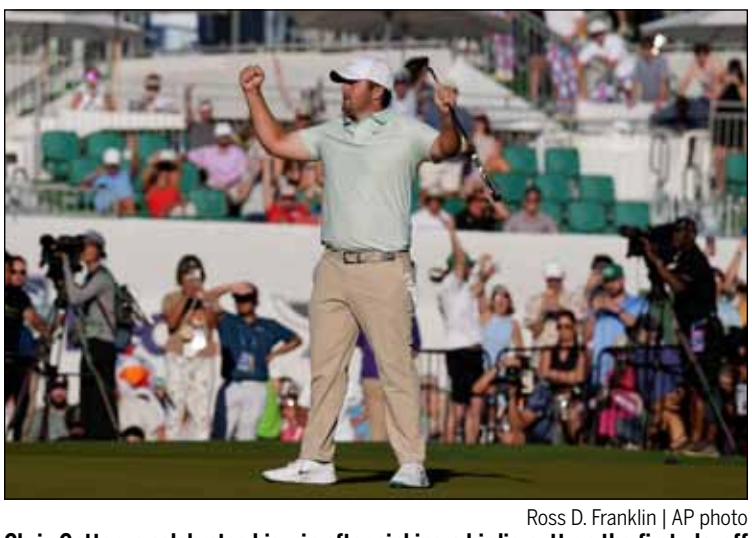
The day also included an all-Italian race for third in the women's bracket; Lucia Dalmasso won it by 0.11 seconds and was weeping near the finish line. At the time, it marked Italy's sixth medal of the games and put the home country at the top of the medals table.

The men's third-place race was a photo finish that put Bulgaria into the medal column thanks to Tervel Zamfirov's lean at the line. All in all, it was a wild, unpredictable day at the snow park for PGS, a sport whose Olympic future is under review, leaving Ledecka, 30, unsure of whether she'll get another chance for that third gold in 2030.

"I don't think anyone will give a (expletive) about what the athletes think, to be very honest," she said. "It's always like that with the Olympic committees. I wish this time will be different and they'll go see how much crowd we brought in, how excited everyone was, how amazing this race was and think, 'Oh, why would we cancel this race?' "

Gotterup wins Phoenix Open on playoff hole vs. Matsuyama

The Associated Press



Ross D. Franklin | AP photo

Chris Gotterup celebrates his win after sinking a birdie putt on the first playoff hole at the 18th green during the final round of the Phoenix Open on Sunday.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Chris Gotterup did his part, charging up the Phoenix Open leaderboard with a closing flourish of five birdies in six holes.

As he kept loose on the first tee at TPC Scottsdale, the 26-year-old knew he would need some help with Hideki Matsuyama still on the course with a one-shot lead.

Gotterup got what he needed with a wild tee shot by Matsuyama on 18 and took advantage when the Japanese star did it again in the playoff.

Gotterup shot 7-under 64 and won with a long birdie putt on the first hole of a playoff Sunday after Matsuyama pulled his tee shot into the water.

"You never know what to expect," Gotterup said. "We went over to the first tee, hit a couple balls, was watching, and then all of a sudden you're out there on 18 and everyone is going nuts and you're like, all right, this is it."

The leader by one heading into the final round, Matsuyama had converted all of his previous five 54-hole leads into wins, but limped to the finish.

The two-time Phoenix Open champion nearly hit his tee shot in the water left of the reachable par-4 17th, leading to a par, and pulled his drive on 18 left into the church pew bunkers — his 11th missed fairway of the day.

Matsuyama hit his second shot into the face of the bunker and couldn't get up-and-down from 43 yards to send the tournament to a playoff. He shot 68 to match Gotterup at 16-under 268.

"I wanted to avoid the playoff as much as I could, but I just hit a bad tee shot there in regulation at 18," Matsuyama said through an interpreter.

Gotterup, winner of the season-opening Sony Open, closed with a 3-foot birdie on 18 in regulation despite hitting his tee shot near the grandstands right and he watched Matsuyama finish in between swings off the first tee.

The long-hitting Gotterup wanted to put pressure on Matsuyama in the playoff and did, uncorking a massive drive down the right side of the fairway.

Matsuyama yanked his tee shot even further left than he did in regulation, caroming it off the far bank of the lake into the water.

He hit his third shot onto the green after a drop, but Gotterup left no doubt by sinking his 27-foot birdie putt for his fourth career PGA Tour win — second in three starts this season.

"I feel confident in what I'm doing and feel like I have played well enough to feel confident to be able to be in those positions," Gotterup said. "So far, I've been able to capitalize on those."

He and the rest of the field had to endure a charge from Scottie Scheffler.

The world's No. 1 player went from being in danger of the missing the cut with a shaky first round to turning heads as his name moved toward the top of the leaderboard.

The two-time Phoenix Open champion had a run of four birdies in five holes on the back nine to pull within a shot, but couldn't take advantage of a massive drive on 18. He closed with a 64 to finish in a five-way tie for third at 15 under.

Matsuyama won consecutive Phoenix Opens in 2016 and 2017, rallying both times.

The Japanese star started the final round with a one-shot lead over four players with several others still in the hunt — led by Scheffler.

The world No. 1 opened the sport's rowdiest tournament with a 73, then shot 65 in the second round to extend the PGA Tour's longest active cuts streak to 66.

Scheffler was seven behind after the second round, trimmed it to five after the third and started inching up the leaderboard Sunday.

Scheffler had three birdies on the front nine and a run of three straight on the back — highlighted by a 72-foot putt from the fringe on 14 — pulled him within one of the lead. A two-putt for birdie from 63 feet on 17 to got Scheffler back within one, but he missed a 24-foot birdie putt on 18 to see his charge fall short.

"I played pretty well — only one round where I didn't have my best stuff," Scheffler said. "If I get in the house the first day with a couple under par it's a little different story today."

Gotterup ended up writing the final chapter — with some help from Matsuyama.

EUROPEAN TOUR

DOHA, Qatar — Patrick Reed capped off his remarkable month in the Middle East by winning the Qatar Masters on Sunday, his second European tour victory in three weeks that all but assures the former Masters champion will have a full PGA Tour card in 2027.

Reed closed with a 2-under 70, turning back an early threat from Jacob Skov Olesen and a late charge by Calum Hill for a two-shot victory at Doha Golf Club.

In the last three weeks, Reed has won the Dubai Desert Classic, lost in a playoff in Bahrain and won in Qatar. No one has posted a lower 72-hole score in three straight European tour events. He will move into the top 20 in the world ranking for the first time since 2021.

"This little run I've had, two wins and a second, it's awesome. We couldn't ask anything more than what we did," Reed said. "It's special, especially to get two wins early on in the season, and hopefully there's a lot more to come."

The 35-year-old American returns home with a far different path than he anticipated when he left.

Reed came to Dubai to begin preparing for his fifth season on Saudi-backed LIV Golf. But he won the Dubai Desert Classic against a strong field and revealed he had not renewed his LIV deal.

Over the next few days, Reed chose to leave LIV Golf with an eye toward returning to the PGA Tour. Reed said he would play a full European tour schedule to try to earn a full PGA Tour card by being among the top 10 in the Race to Dubai who were not already exempt.

The next two weeks in Bahrain and Qatar took care of that. Reed now leads the Race to Dubai with 2,259 points, already more points than the player last season who earned the final PGA Tour card. He still has the four majors and four Rolex Series events ahead of him, and now Reed has his eye on more than just a full card in America next year.

"It's always been a dream of mine to be an American who wins the Race to Dubai, and we're off to a fast start," Reed said.

Collin Morikawa in 2021 is the only American to finish at No. 1 on the European Tour.

Reed finished at 16-under 272.

The European tour is off next week before beginning a three-week stretch in Africa. It was not clear when Reed would play next. His world ranking assures him a spot in all four majors, though the European tour schedule is not ideal for travel leading to the U.S. majors.

LIV GOLF

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Elvis Smylie won LIV Golf Riyadh on Saturday night in his tour debut, closing with a bogey-free 8-under 64 under the lights to hold off Jon Rahm by a stroke.

The 23-year-old Australian also led Ripper GC to the team title.

"It's a dream come true," said Smylie, who officially joined the team last month. "I really didn't know what to expect this week. Playing at night is obviously a whole different ballgame out here. I wanted to come out here and make a statement. I wanted to prove that I'm one of the best out here, and I feel like I've done that. It's only up from here."

Smylie finished at 24 under.

Rahm closed with a bogey-free 63.

Peter Uihlein was third at 21 under after a 67.

No. 2 UCLA tops No. 8 Michigan to widen Big Ten lead

The Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Lauren Betts had 16 points, 16 rebounds, five assists and three blocks to help No. 2 UCLA hold off No. 8 Michigan for a 69-66 win on Sunday.

The Wolverines trailed by 11 points with less than two minutes left and with a chance to tie the game, Syla Swords shot an airball on a 3-pointer with 2.2 seconds left.

UCLA (23-1, 13-0 Big Ten) took a two-game lead over Michigan (20-4, 11-2) in the conference with its 17th straight victory since losing to No. 4 Texas in November.

The Bruins outscored Michigan by 14 over the second and third quarters, leading by as much as 13 points, and finished with their NCAA -high ninth win over an AP Top 25 team.

The Wolverines' school-record, nine-game winning streak in Big Ten games was snapped by a big and experienced team that plays stifling defense and is led by a 6-foot-7 preseason All-America center that does it all.

Betts was 8 of 17 from the field, grabbed rebounds at both ends of the court, set up teammates for shots after drawing double teams and used her size to block or alter shots.

Her surrounding cast is talented, too.

UCLA's Kiki Rice scored 20, Gabriela Jaquez had 13 and Gianna Kneepkens scored 12.

Michigan's Olivia Olson had 20 points, Mila Holloway had 15 and Te'Yala Delfosse added 10. Swords was limited to eight points, missing 10 of 13 shots.

The highly anticipated matchup drew a season-high 6,108 crowd to Crisler Center a few hours before the Super Bowl.



Lon Horwedel | AP photo

UCLA center Lauren Betts (51) battles for a rebound with Michigan forward Ashley Sofilkanich (15) in the first half on Sunday.

No. 3 SOUTH CAROLINA 93, TENNESSEE 50

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Ta'Niya Latson scored 21 points, Joyce Edwards added 20 and South Carolina ran past Tennessee for its ninth straight victory over the Lady Vols.

The Gamecocks (24-2, 10-1 Southeastern Conference) pulled away midway through the second quarter and never let up after that, finishing with a single-game program SEC shooting mark of 69% (36-52).

Tennessee has struggled, like most other SEC teams, against South Carolina the past few years, although the Lady Vols' previous three games — all Gamecock wins — were decided by single digits.

And the Lady Vols matched the Gamecocks energy early on as things were tied at 16 last in the first quarter. That's when South Carolina took control with a 9-2 run as Latson had five points and Edwards four.

Tennessee faltered again right before half, missing six of its final seven shots. Meanwhile, the Gamecocks were on fire, hitting six of their last eight to lead 47-32 at the break.

Things only got worse the rest of the way as the Lady Vols were outscored 46-18. Tennessee was held 28 points below its season average. The 43-point defeat was the worst in program history, surpassing a 31-point loss to Texas in 1984.

No. 5 LSU 77, AUBURN 44

AUBURN, Ala. — ZaKiyah Johnson scored 16 points, Mikaylah Williams added 12 and LSU bounced back from a midweek loss to rout Auburn.

LSU's defense proved to be the key, holding Auburn to 25% shooting from the field and 14.3% from 3-point range.

Flau'jae Johnson, LSU's leading scorer, finished with 10 points, seven rebounds and four assists. Amiya Joyner notched a double-double, finishing with 10 points and 10 rebounds.

LSU (22-3, 8-3 Southeastern Conference) jumped out to an early lead after holding Auburn (13-12, 2-9) to just six points in the first quarter and took a 36-13 lead into the half. Auburn made 5 of 30 shots from the field and missed all 14 from behind the arc in the first half.

LSU built its advantage with a 10-0 run that lasted nearly eight minutes during the first half, then closed out the half with an 8-0 spurt.

Once again, size proved to be an issue for Auburn. The Tigers were outrebounded 54-30, and LSU held a 34-24 advantage in points in the paint.

No. 6 LOUISVILLE 84, SYRACUSE 65

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Laura Ziegler scored 22 points and Louisville raced out to a quick lead it never gave up in a win over Syracuse.

The Cardinals (22-4, 12-1 ACC) were coming off a one-point loss to Duke that snapped the team's 14-game winning streak. They scored the first 12 points against Syracuse, holding the Orange without a field goal in the first quarter. Louisville built the lead to 28-6 over the Orange (19-5, 9-4) as Syracuse missed all 13 of its field goal attempts in the first 10 minutes.

Syracuse didn't score its first basket until a jumper by Dominique Darius with 10 seconds gone in the second quarter, but the Cardinals went on to build a 36-14 lead.

The Orange stormed back, closing the first half on a 22-6 run to narrow the margin to 44-36 at the break. Darius fueled the comeback, scoring all her 16 first-half points in the quarter and going 6-of-6 from the field, including two 3s.

Syracuse closed to within five at 59-54 on a layup by Burrows off a Louisville turnover with two minutes to go in the third, but that's the closest Syracuse would get. The Cardinals closed the game on a 25-11 run.

No. 9 OHIO STATE 80, OREGON 64

EUGENE, Ore. — Elsa Lemmila scored a career-high 23 points to help Ohio State beat Oregon.

Kennedy Cambridge added 20 points, hitting five 3-pointers, for the Buckeyes (22-3, 11-2 Big Ten), who won their fourth straight game and 11th in 12 games.

Jaloni Cambridge scored 19 points to surpass 1,000 points in her career.

The Buckeyes shot 52% from the field and made 17 of its 19 free throws. Senior guard Chance Gray, who played her first two years at Oregon before transferring to Ohio State, had eight points and five rebounds in her return game.

Ari Long made four 3-pointers while scoring 16 points to lead the Ducks (18-8, 6-7), who had a four-game winning streak snapped. Oregon is 2-4 vs. Top 25 teams this year, but 0-3 against those opponents at home.

Sarah Rambus added 13 points for Oregon, which committed 23 turnovers that led to 17 points for Ohio State. Mia Jacobs had 13 points and five rebounds for the Ducks, who shot 37% from the field.

COLORADO 80, No. 14 TCU 79

BOULDER, Colo. — Jade Masogayo's three-point play with two seconds remaining lifted Colorado to a stunning victory over TCU, denying the Horned Frogs a spot at the top of the Big 12 Conference.

After Donovyn Hunter's driving layup gave TCU a 79-77 lead with five seconds remaining, Masogayo took a sideline inbounds pass, drove the right side of the lane and made a short bank shot to tie the score. Kennedy Basham was called for a foul on the play and Masogayo sank the and-1 for the win.

TCU led 76-70 after a layup by Olivia Miles with about three minutes remaining. Colorado scored the next five points, then Miles made a free throw for a 77-75 lead with 50 seconds left. Masagayo made two tying free throws with 24 seconds left.

Masaqayo scored a career-high 23 points on 7-of-11 shooting plus 9 of 10 free throws. Desiree Wooten added 19 points, Logyn Greer 17 and Zyanna Walker 15 for the Buffaloes (16-8, 7-5 Big 12). Masagayo topped her previous best of 22 points against TCU last season.

Miles matched her season high with 31 points. Marta Suarez scored 20 and Hunter 17 for TCU (21-4, 9-3). With a win, TCU would have shared first place with 15th-ranked Baylor, which is 10-2 in the conference.

No. 17 DUKE 95, SMU 36

DURHAM, N.C. — Freshman center Arianna Roberson had career highs of 22 points and 16 rebounds off the bench, Toby Fournier added 26 points and Duke routed SMU for the Blue Devils' 15th straight win.

Duke's 13th straight ACC victory extends the Blue Devils' best conference start under head coach Kara Lawson. The 15 consecutive wins are also the most under Lawson, who is in her fifth full season leading the Blue Devils (18-6, 13-0).

Delaney Thomas had 16 points and 10 rebounds, and Ashlon Jackson was Duke's third player with a double-double in the game, scoring 11 points to go with 10 assists.

Fournier and Jackson scored eight points each and the Blue Devils raced out to a 24-6 lead at the end of the first quarter. They led 5-2 before going on a 19-3 run.

Roberson and Fournier scored eight points each in the second quarter and the Blue Devils continued to dominate, ending the half with a 46-16 lead. The Blue Devils shot 56% in the first half, compared to 22% for SMU.

TEXAS A&M 72, No. 21 ALABAMA 69

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Ny'Ceara Pryor scored 20 points with two clutch free throws late, Fatmata Janneh added a double-double and Texas A&M upset Alabama to snap a six-game losing streak.

Jessica Timmons had a three-point play to give Alabama a 57-53 lead with 9:34 remaining. Lemyah Hylton hit a 3-pointer and Lauren Ware added a layup to cap a 10-0 run as Texas A&M moved in front 63-57. Timmons did all the scoring in a 7-0 spurt and the Crimson Tide moved ahead 64-63 at 4:11.

Alabama's Essence Cody was called for a flagrant-1 technical, fouling out with 3:03 left. Ace Austin, who was fouled by Ware prior to the technical, made 1 of 2 free throws before Salese Blow sank two for the technical and the Aggies led 67-65. Pryor and Naomi Jones traded baskets before Janneh made 1 of 2 foul shots for a three-point lead with 21 seconds remaining.

Karly Weathers scored nine seconds later, but Pryor hit two foul shots and Ware blocked a 3-pointer at the other end to preserve the upset.

Pryor added seven assists, six rebounds and four steals for the Aggies (9-10, 2-8 Southeastern Conference). Janneh had 12 points and 15 rebounds, while Ware scored 13.

Timmons totaled 19 points and eight rebounds to pace the Crimson Tide (20-5, 7-5). Ta'Mia Scott added 18 points and Cody scored 13 with seven rebounds.

No. 24 WASHINGTON 91, WISCONSIN 86, OT

MADISON, Wis. — Avery Howell had a career-high 34 points and 14 rebounds — the 6-foot sophomore's sixth double-double this season — and Sayvia Sellers scored 23 points to help Washington beat Wisconsin in overtime.

Howell scored eight points in OT, including two of her career-high tying six 3-pointers. Elle Ladine finished with 16 points for Washington (18-6, 8-5 Big Ten). The Huskies had lost back-to-back games for just the second time this season.

Destiny Howell hit five 3-pointers and finished with 28 points for the Badgers. Gift Uchenna had 24 points, 12 rebounds, three steals and three blocks.

Laci Steele added 10 points and Ronnie Porter tied her season high with 10 assists to go with eight points and six steals.

Destiny Howell made a 3-pointer and, after Brynn McGaughy hit two free throws on the other end, was fouled as she hit another and the and-1 free throw gave the Badgers a one-point lead with 1:09 to play. Avery Howell answered with a putback off a miss by McGaughy that made it 87-86 with 43 seconds left.

No. 25 NORTH CAROLINA 84, WAKE FOREST 56

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Nyla Brooks scored 21 points, Nyla Harris added 19 and North Carolina rolled past Wake Forest.

North Carolina (20-5, 9-3 ACC) has won seven straight and reached 20 wins for the 34th time in program history.

Wake Forest led 9-6 through the first five minutes before North Carolina hit four 3-pointers — two each from Brooks and Lanie Grant — in a 16-0 run. The Tar Heels led 22-11 heading to the second quarter. Two more 3s from Brooks helped push the lead to 14 points before the Tar Heels settled for a 39-29 advantage at halftime.

Harris scored 11 points in the third quarter and the Tar Heels extended their lead to 65-42 entering the fourth. Carolina's lead first reached 30 points at 78-48 on a short jumper by Blanca Thomas with about 3 1/2 minutes to go.

MEN'S TOP 25

No. 2 MICHIGAN 82, OHIO STATE 61

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Aday Mara scored a career-high 24 points, Morez Johnson Jr. and Yaxel Lendeborg had double-doubles and Michigan rolled to a victory over Ohio State.

The Big Ten-leading Wolverines (22-1, 12-1) led throughout as they made 10 3-pointers — including nine in the first half — and dominated in rebounding. Michigan had 17 offensive boards and outrebounded Ohio State 44-31.

Johnson had 11 points and 12 rebounds and Lendeborg added 14 points and 14 rebounds for Michigan, which has won six of the past seven meetings.

Bruce Thornton led the Buckeyes (15-8, 7-6) with 16 points and Devin Royal scored 15. Ohio State has dropped two of three.

Michigan led 44-34 at halftime and was up by as many as 23 late in the game.

The Buckeyes were 8 of 25 from the field in the second half.

It was the worst loss by Ohio State to Michigan at home since Feb. 9, 1976, when the Wolverines rolled to a 90-66 win.

No. 13 TEXAS TECH 70, WEST VIRGINIA 63

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — JT Toppin had 22 points and nine rebounds and Texas Tech broke a two-game losing skid with a victory over West Virginia.

Donovan Atwell added 15 points for the Red Raiders (17-6, 7-3 Big 12) and Christian Anderson had 13 points and 11 assists in his return from a one-game absence because of illness.

Brenen Lorient scored 20 points for West Virginia (15-9, 6-5), which lost for just the second time in 15 home games.

West Virginia scored the first four baskets after halftime, all on layups, to trim a 13-point deficit to 39-35, but the Mountaineers went the next four minutes without a basket and got no closer.

Texas Tech, which never trailed, kept distancing itself with a steady diet of 3-pointers. Jaylen Petty, Atwell and Toppin each hit from long distance in a span of less than two minutes, and the Red Raiders pushed their lead to 52-37 with 13:17 remaining.

Lorient scored nine points in the final four minutes, but West Virginia's comeback bid came up short.

Brunson powers Knicks, snaps Celtics' 5-game streak

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Jalen Brunson scored 31 points and Josh Hart added 19 to help the New York Knicks beat the cold-shooting Boston Celtics 111-89 on Sunday.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 11 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks, who never trailed over the final 42 minutes. Mikal Bridges (14 points) and recently acquired Jose Alvarado (12 points) rounded out the double-digit scorers for New York, which shot 14 of 45 (40%) from behind the 3-point line.

Jaylen Brown socred 26 points and Derrick White added 19 for the Celtics, who saw their five-game winning streak snapped, Baylor Scheierman started in place for the injured Sam Hauser and finished with 10 points, 13 rebounds and five assists.

Boston shot 37% for the game and was 7-of-41 (17.1%) from behind the arc.

The matchup pitted two of the top teams in the Eastern Conference, with Boston entering with a one-game lead over New York for second place. They'll meet one more time during the regular season on April 9 in New York.

New York pushed its advantage to 85-68 entering the fourth quarter after closing the third on a 20-7 run. The lead kept growing when Brunson scored 10 straight points to give the Knicks a 23-point lead with four minutes left.

Boston revisited the "Hack-a-Robinson" tactic that was introduced during last spring's playoff meeting with the Knicks. A career 51% shooter from the free-throw line and connecting at a 38% clip this season, Mitchell Robinson had the last laugh when he went 2 of 2 at the line with 2:32 left in the third after the reserve big man clanked all four free throws he attempted during the first half.

HEAT 132, WIZARDS 101

WASHINGTON — Kasparas Jakucionis was 6 for 6 from 3-point range and scored 22 points, Bam Adebayo also had 22 and Miami routed Washington.

Norman Powell added 21 points for Miami, and Kel'el Ware had 19 points and 14 rebounds. The Heat snapped a two-game losing streak and added to their team record with a 14th 130-plus point effort of the season.

Andrew Wiggins had 11 points and 10 rebounds as eighth-place Miami closed within a half-game of seventh-place Orlando in the Eastern Conference.

Tristan Vukcevic had 14 points to lead Washington. The Wizards lost back-to-back games for the first time since a nine-game slide from Jan. 7-24.

Alex Sarr added 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Wizards, who saw both Kyshawn George and Bilal Coulibaly depart early with injuries.

CLIPPERS 115, TIMBERWOLVES 96

MINNEAPOLIS — Kawhi Leonard had 41 points and eight rebounds and Los Angeles beat slumping Minnesota.

John Collins had 15 points on 6-of-9 shooting, and Yanic Konan Niederhauser also scored 15 points. The Clippers took command with a 17-3 run closing out the third quarter.

Anthony Edwards led Minnesota with 23 points, and Julius Randle had 17. The Timberwolves have lost three of their last four, all to sub-.500 opponents. Minnesota made just 8 of 33 3-point attempts and committed 20 turnovers while being held under 100 points for just the second time this season.

Ayo Dosunmu, making his Timberwolves debut after being acquired in a trade with Chicago, had 11 points and two steals.

The Timberwolves were coming off one of their most frustrating losses of the season, when they blew an 18-point third-quarter lead in a home loss to the lowly New Orleans Pelicans.

The first half was more of the same for Minnesota. Leonard scored 24 points and helped key an 18-2 run late in the second quarter that give the Clippers a 54-42 lead.

Minnesota made just 3 of 18 3-point attempts and committed 13 turnovers in the first half. Edwards was 0 for 6 on 3s and turned it over a team-high four times in the first half.

Los Angeles played without its two key trade deadline acquisitions. Darius Garland, who arrived from Cleveland in the James Harden trade, remained sidelined with a sprained big toe on his right foot.

The Clippers had already said wingman Bennedict Mathurin, picked up in a swap with the Pacers, wouldn't debut with his new team until Tuesday in Houston.

RAPTORS 122, PACERS 104

TORONTO — Scottie Barnes had 25 points and 14 rebounds to help Toronto beat Indiana.

Barnes was 12 of 20 from the field and had six assists, four blocks and two steals in 33 minutes. Toronto won its second straight to move 10 games above .500 at 32-22.

RJ Barrett had 20 points, eight rebounds and five assists, and Sandro Mamukelashvili added 17 points. Trayce Jackson-Davis had 10 points and 10 rebounds in 15 minutes in his Toronto debut following a trade with Golden State.

Pascal Siakam led Indiana with 18 points, Jay Huff had 15 and Jarace Walker 13.

Last in the Eastern Conference, the injury-ravaged Pacers have lost four straight to fall to 13-40.

PFBC urges ice safety regarding frozen rivers

Staff report

While the sight of a frozen river or stream may look pretty, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is warning everyone to stay off of moving bodies of water that have frozen this winter.

Along the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg, the PFBC said when a thick crust of ice forms on rivers statewide, the phenomenon attracts curious onlookers wishing to see the ice up close, and there is a temptation to walk out onto the ice.

Unlike lakes and ponds which, when frozen with a thick layer of ice, can produce recreational opportunities such as ice fishing and skating, moving bodies of water such as rivers and streams are never safe to walk on.

With rapid current flowing beneath the ice, the frozen surface remains unstable and treacherous.

A fall into any frigid water can cause rapid hypothermia, inhalation of water, and can lead to drowning.

When falling through river ice, a victim will be swept under the ice by strong current, and can become trapped beneath the ice.

Emergencies involving victims who have walked onto frozen rivers also put first responders at risk during rescues.

When ice fishing or even ice skating on a lake or pond, the PFBC recommends at least 4 inches of ice, and to always wear a life jacket or coat with flotation built in.

For more information on approved ice recreation, including ice fishing, on non-moving waters such as lakes and ponds, visit the PFBC website at pa.gov/agencies/fishandboat/fishing/basics/ice-fishing.

Ryan Walt, PFBC Ice Safety Specialist, said, "What we really want to get across is, on moving water, if there's ice on there, please don't venture out on it. It may look enticing. It may look strong, but it's not, and it's not safe. So, don't put yourself at risk, and don't put first responders at risk.

"Because the last thing you want to do is fall through the ice and get yourself in trouble or get your friends in trouble, and then ultimately, put first responders at rick to go out and effect a rescue.

"Absolutely do not go out on moving water, on ice that's on moving water. There's a lot of different fluctuations. Thicknesses change, as well as there's current that's underneath that ice. It is not safe."

Derrick Noonan, Waterways Conservation Officer, said, "We understand that people want to come down, take pictures, look at it. But we ask that you stay off the ice, because at that point, you're putting yourself at risk. You're putting other people at risk to fall through. So, we ask that you stay off of any river that is frozen.

PA Game Commission: Pheasants to be released next week

Pennsylvania pheasant hunters again will be getting a pleasant surprise for the season's final weeks.

For the second consecutive year, the Pennsylvania Game Commission will be releasing approximately 8,400 pheasants — mostly hens — to provide additional hunting recreation in the last two weeks of pheasant season, which runs through Feb. 28.

"The Game Commission purchases the pheasant chicks raised on our game farms from a private-sector supplier," said Wildlife Operations Division Chief Ian Gregg. "During the 2024 and 2025 production seasons, we requested our supplier to raise additional pheasants to be held through the fall and early winter as an 'insurance policy' against any disease issues that might arise in the supplier's primary breeder flocks. With flocks presently healthy, it's not feasible to hold onto these 'backup' birds, which will be released to provide late-winter hunting opportunities."

Releases are planned to occur during a two-day window next week, on Wednesday, Feb. 11, and Thursday, Feb. 12, at select locations in each of the Game Commission's six regions. Hunters should be aware, however, that weather and logistical issues could result in last-minute changes to the planned schedule.

The locations expected to receive birds in the February stocking include:

Northeast Region

State Game Lands (SGL) 36, 123, 219, 250, and 289 (Bradford County)

SGL 40 and Beltzville area (Carbon County)

SGLs 226 and 329 (Columbia County)

SGL 187 and Nescopeck State Park (Luzerne County)

SGLs 84 and 165 (Northumberland County)

The Game Commission's regular pheasant stocking schedule extends from early October to early January, with over 225,000 pheasants released during that period in 2025-26, and similar numbers planned for 2026-27.

"With a smaller number of pheasants being stocked this month compared to releases earlier in the season, a proportionally smaller number of sites are being stocked," said Gregg. "This approach may require pheasant hunters to travel a bit farther to find birds, but will maintain logistical efficiency and allow stockings to be targeted to areas where mid-winter habitat and access conditions are most suitable."

Gregg noted that none of the pheasants released this week will be leg-banded; however, hunters might harvest holdover banded birds from releases earlier in the season.

"We thank hunters for their cooperation in reporting over 2,600 banded pheasants this hunting season as part of our game farm pheasant harvest rate study, and we continue to welcome reports of any banded pheasants harvested late in the season. Also, for anyone who harvested a banded pheasant earlier in the season but hasn't yet gotten around to reporting it, it is not too late to call the information in to the toll-free number on the band so that your data can be included in the analysis."

DEP invests more than $17M for conservation projects across Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is investing $17,325,163 for 89 projects across Pennsylvania that will restore streams, improve fish and wildlife habitat, and reclaim mine lands.

The grants are part of the Growing Greener program — Pennsylvania's largest environmental grant program.

"Growing Greener grants are one of the best investments that Pennsylvania makes into improving our environment," said DEP Secretary Jessica Shirley. "These 89 projects will lead to cleaner water for us to drink and swim in, better habitat for fish and wildlife, and less pollution in our streams and rivers. It enables local governments, county conservation districts, and non-profit organizations to make Pennsylvania a better place to live and thrive."

Growing Greener is the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history to address critical environmental concerns. For the 2025 grant round, 77 projects were selected to restore streams, improve watersheds, and address legacy water pollution from abandoned mine drainage.

Luzerne County grants

- Luzerne Conservation District — $85,000 for the Toby Creek Watershed Assessment
- Luzerne County Chief Executive Officer — $50,000 for the Luzerne County Act 167 Update (Act 167 Grant)





Entertainment Monday

contact us >> ae@timesleader.com

Times Leader | Monday, February 9, 2026 • Section C

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Celebrating Black female filmmakers



In Frame
Margaret Roarty

Because I am the proud owner of a Criterion Channel subscription, I always look forward to the beginning of the month when the platform debuts a bunch of new film collections to peruse.

Each collection is carefully curated and diverse, representing a wide range of filmmakers, genres, movements, and themes from movies made around the world.

Sometimes, the collections will have something to do with the time of year. For instance, since Valentine's Day is coming up, there's a collection called "Yearning," which features romances like Martin Scorsese's "The Age of Innocence" and Wong Kar-wai's "In the Mood for Love."

I've seen a lot of underrated gems thanks to the Criterion Channel, and I've even gotten my hands on some films I previously couldn't find streaming anywhere else.

The subscription is certainly pricey, but for an entire year's worth of what is essentially a movie gold mine, for me, it's worth it.

Since February is also Black History Month, the channel is celebrating Black American cinema, from its pioneers to contemporary voices.

I was especially drawn to the collection "Black Debutantes," which showcases first features by Black female directors. I had the pleasure of watching two films from this collection over the weekend, and I'd like to share my thoughts on them with you, dear readers.

Not only are these films examples of the groundbreaking work by Black female filmmakers in the '80s and '90s, but they're also crucial works in American independent cinema as a whole.



Screenshot by Margaret Roarty | Times Leader

Filmmaker Cheryl Dunye, left, and Guinevere Turner in a screenshot of Dunye's 1996 film, 'The Watermelon Woman.'



Screenshot by Margaret Roarty | Times Leader

Screenshot of Seret Scott, left, and Bill Gunn in a scene from Kathleen Collins' 1982 film 'Losing Ground.'

"Losing Ground" (1982)

This movie feels like a dream. Sadly, it's one of the only films director and writer Kathleen Collins made before her death at 46, only six years after "Losing Ground" was released.

Additionally, "Losing Ground" didn't play outside of the film festival circuit while Collins was alive. From what I can tell, it was completely overlooked at the time. Which is a shame because, according to writer Nelson George, it's the first feature-length drama directed by an African-American woman since the 1920s.

"Losing Ground" is about Professor of Logic Sara Rodgers, a successful and reserved woman who is married to the more free-spirited Victor, an extroverted artist who is way more focused on chasing his own whims than focusing on his relationship with his wife. Chasing his inspiration, Victor suggests the couple stay in upstate New York for the summer, in a rural area filled with grand homes and beautiful, lush greenery.

Sara is hesitant at first. After all, she needs to be near a library to continue her academic work while on break from teaching. But she eventually gives in. Over the course of the summer, Victor and Sara's relationship is tested, as they both go on a journey of self-discovery that pulls them in opposite directions.

The way Collins plays with light in this movie is otherworldly. The summer heat is palpable, the greenery, vibrant. There's a softness to the world that feels nostalgic, and I think the low-budget feeling just adds to that.

The pacing in this movie is languid and seemingly meandering, until everything boils over near the end. Like the summer heat, Sara and Victor's resentment for each other simmered just below the surface the entire time.

I loved Collins's use of wide shots, the way she would often set the camera up in the corner of the room, and allow her characters to weave in and out of the shot. I miss this kind of blocking in modern films, where filmmakers will often go for close-ups and medium shots instead.

"Losing Ground" marks a watershed moment in independent cinema. Collins's work paved the way for other Black female filmmakers, and I'm so happy her work has been rediscovered in recent years.

"The Watermelon Woman" (1996)

I've always been a sucker for movies about movies, and "The Watermelon Woman" by Cheryl Dunye is no exception.

Dunye stars in the film as Cheryl, a video-store clerk and aspiring director from Philadelphia, whose interest in forgotten Black actresses of the 1930s and '40s leads her to one credited only as the Watermelon Woman. She plays Elsie, a mammy-type role, in a favorite film of Cheryl's, "Plantation Dreams."

While navigating her new relationship with her girlfriend, Diana (Guinevere Turner), and her friendship with fellow video store clerk Tamara (Valarie Walker), Cheryl attempts to uncover the truth about who the actress really was by making a documentary about her.

Something I really love about "The Watermelon Woman" is how Dunye fuses together narrative fiction and documentary-style filmmaking. A lot of her earlier work is also experimental in nature, and I think "The Watermelon Woman" perfectly captures her ability to seamlessly blur the lines between fiction and reality.

The film feels deeply personal, born out of a desire to see yourself and your experiences reflected back at you. It's easy to look at "The Watermelon Woman" in 2026 and not understand how truly groundbreaking it was at the time.

In the '90s, as Dunye explained in a conversation with Martine Syms for the Criterion Channel, movies centering the experience of queer Black women were nonexistent. In fact, as far as I can tell, "The Watermelon Woman" is the first film directed by a Black lesbian, about the Black lesbian experience.

Prominent LGBTQ+ writers and academics like Cheryl Clarke, Camille Paglia, David Rakoff, and Sarah Schulman appear in supporting roles, in conversation with who they really are, which lends yet another meta-textual layer to the movie.

Something else I really love about "The Watermelon Woman" is how vibrant it is. The settings, characters, and costumes all feel so colorful and alive. The restoration that the Criterion Collection did back in 2023 is truly stunning. Film grain is also just so tactile — something you don't get with digital cinematography. I just kept thinking to myself, "I wish movies still looked like this."

Dunye tackles a lot of heavy themes in this movie, like the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and race, but she does so with lightness and humor. Because of that, "The Watermelon Woman" is part romantic comedy, part serious examination of how the creative accomplishments of women, especially queer Black women, in Hollywood have often been minimized or outright forgotten.

Dunye's own experience researching historical records of queer, female filmmakers and coming up empty handed inspired her to drawn attention to how incomplete those archives really are, how systematic the barriers. How easy it is to fall into the cracks when you're a marginalized individual. Unless someone finds value in your work, your accomplishments might go forever unrecognized.

I thought it was really eye-opening that Cheryl often ran into barriers or dead ends when exploring official records. The places she actually found helpful were in her own community, talking to the people who knew the Watermelon Woman. Again, it goes to show how limited those official records are when it comes to historically marginalized people.

As someone who's always dreamed of making their own film, Cheryl was really relatable to me as a character, someone who is trying to recapture a forgotten history, while claiming agency in her own life. The way her art is so integral to who she is, and how she experiences the world. It's so specific and, because of that, so universal.

"The Watermelon Woman" is a fantastic film debut and is certainly a landmark film in New Queer Cinema. I admire Dunye's willingness to play with form and to explore herself and the world, both on screen and off.

"So much of my art is therapy," Dunye once said, "using it to really talk about the fabric of my life."

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.

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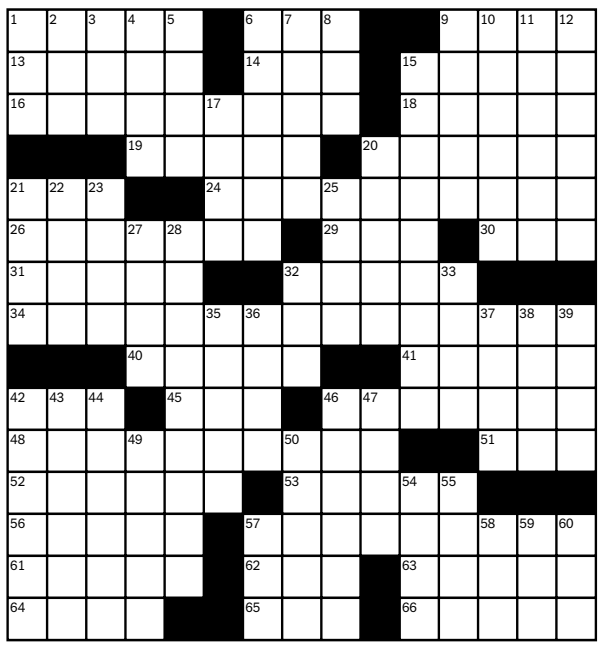
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The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 0105



PUZZLE BY LYNN LEMPEL

ACROSS

1 Value
6 Volcanic coating that buried Pompeii
9 Overhead light?
13 Listlessness
14 Situation that precedes overtime
15 Fruit-peeling gadget
16 Meeting spot for a company's overseers
18 Ventilated
19 Actor Reeves who plays John Wick
20 Clothing
21 Wrestler-turned-actor with a trademark do
24 1976 film with Robert De Niro as an alienated cabbie
26 Lawyer, or a lawyer's advice
29 Gloppy gunk
30 Op-___ (newspaper pieces)
31 Advantageous quality
32 Aristocrat
34 Enjoy a vacation day, say
40 Reside
41 Burr who dueled with Hamilton
42 Wane
45 One ___ time
46 Mark Twain, for Samuel Langhorne Clemens
48 Bug killer that goes "smack!"
51 Losing general at Appomattox
52 Relating to a son or daughter
53 Fanny ___, central figure in Broadway's "Funny Girl"
56 Poet Dickinson
57 Gridiron success ... or, when read as two words, the conclusion to the sequence formed by the starts of 16-, 24-, 34- and 48-Across
61 Backpackers' shelters
62 Write-___ (unlikely election winners)
63 Home with a dome
64 Lumps of coal, for a snowman
65 Understand
66 Relinquished

DOWN

1 Spider's creation
2 Peace promoter Yoko
3 Cell's messenger material
4 Istanbul native
5 Conceal
6 Lacking a key, in music
7 Crazy Horse's people
8 Adjustable skirt feature
9 Port-au-Prince's country
10 Get there
11 Looked lasciviously
12 Commands
15 Police officer who monitors an assigned area
17 Label as G or R, say
20 Spicy marinade with chili peppers
21 Exam for a doctor-to-be
22 Parks honored in the Capitol's Statuary Hall
23 Walrus's long tooth
25 Composer Stravinsky
27 Have to have
28 Passengers getting an illicit free ride
32 Org. for Patriot games
33 Actor McGregor with a Golden Globe for "Fargo"
35 Pertaining to development in the womb
36 Off-key, in a way
37 Like some history or hygiene
38 City surrounding Vatican City
39 On bended ___
42 Overly refined
43 "Yikes!," to a Brit
44 Reporter's attribution atop an article
46 Read
47 Rock's Carmen or Clapton
49 Earthy deposits by a river
50 Steak similar to a porterhouse
54 Stylish
55 Margin
57 "___ better to have loved and lost ..."
58 Passé
59 Misfortune
60 Agree silently

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

B	A	D	A	P	P	L	E	S		S	P	A	D	E
I	C	E	P	A	L	A	C	E		T	O	B	E	Y
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Put down your headphones. Spotify wants you to pick up an actual book

By Cerys Davies
Los Angeles Times

Following major expansions to Spotify's podcast branch, the audio streamer is turning its attention to its audiobooks.

The Sweden-based audio platform said it is focused on bolstering online book discovery and physical ownership. In a release Thursday morning, the company announced a technology called Page Match, where readers can switch between reading a physical copy of a book and listening to the audiobook version of it by scanning the page. Users will also be able to purchase physical books through the platform.

"We believe the future of reading or listening needs to be flexible and fit more seamlessly into people's lives," Owen Smith, Spotify's global head of audiobooks, said in a news release. "Now we're extending Spotify's discovery and engagement strengths across both audio and physical formats, so authors can build deeper connections with their audiences and books can follow readers wherever they go."

When users are physically reading a book (or an e-book), Page Match lets readers pick up where they left off with a quick camera scan. By taking a picture of the page, the new feature will recognize where the reader is in the book and begin playing the audiobook from that page. It also works when a reader wants to switch back from audio to a physical format, with just another quick page scan. This feature will be fully rolled out by the end of the month.

Page Match is fully available for Premium subscribers and Audiobook+ members to use, while free users can access the feature when they have purchased an audiobook through Spotify.

In a partnership with Bookshop.org, users in the U.S. and the U.K. can purchase physical books through Spotify in spring. When buying through Spotify, Bookshop.org will route sales to independent bookstores, handle pricing, inventory and order fulfillment.

"We are excited to see the impact Spotify's scale will have for local bookstores," said Andy Hunter, the CEO of Bookshop.org in a statement. "By meeting readers where they are and linking to Bookshop.org, Spotify is financially supporting indie booksellers with each purchase."

Founded in 2006, the company, with a large presence in L.A.'s Arts District, has become the world's most popular audio streaming subscription service. The platform offers access to more than 100 million tracks, podcasts and audiobooks in over 180 markets. Audiobooks were first added to the streaming service in 2022.

Every month premium subscribers get an allocated number of hours of audiobook listening. This service is available in 22 global markets and has over 500,000 English-language titles. According to Spotify, more than half of eligible Premium users in English-language markets have tried an audiobook on Spotify, with new listeners up 36% and listening hours up 37%.

Because of the demand for audiobooks on the platform, Smith said in the release, Spotify has become "a real growth engine for the publishing industry and changing how people find their next great read."

Over the past several years, Spotify has worked to grow the streaming platform beyond music. The company has been focused on growing its podcasting division by opening a new recording studio in Hollywood, premiering several shows in partnership with Netflix and expanding its creator monetization program. The service also recently raised prices for premium listeners in the U.S.

SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

JUMBLE®

Answer:

CONVEX HANGAR DOMINO
GRATIS MUTINY HAGGLE

Zeros on their own are worth zero —

AND NOTHING MORE

I	D	T	A	G		T	E	D	L	A	S	S	O	
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D	E	T	E	S	T		N	E	G	L	E	C	T	S

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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

St. David's Society of the Wyoming Valley will meet at 5:45 p.m. Feb. 11 at Cris Nicks, the corner of Horton and Barney streets in Wilkes-Barre. This is the last meeting before our annual banquet and we encourage as many members as possible to attend. New members are always welcome. We will also have a children's book reading at 10 a.m. Feb. 21 at the Osterhout Library, 71 South Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre. Weather permitting, at 1 p.m., we will lay a wreath at the Miners Memorial on Public Square, next to the King's College building.

Wyoming Valley Barbershop Harmony Quartets are taking reservations for Singing Valentines to be delivered Friday, Feb. 13, and Saturday, Feb. 14. The quartets will deliver three love songs, a box of chocolates, a rose and a special card to your special someone for $100. To order, please call 570-285-4810 and leave a message; calls will be returned promptly.

59th annual German Nite. Doors open at 5 p.m. Feb. 14 in St. Nicholas - St. Mary School Auditorium, South Washington Street, Wilkes-Barre, for this traditional pre-Lenten feast. A German-style meal will be served buffet-style from 6 to 7 p.m., followed by music for dancing from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. with the band Schnitzel. Tickets are $40 per person, available through the parish office, 570-823-7736.

Fine Arts Fiesta 70th anniversary gala, 70 Trips Around the Square, 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, May 9, at Westmoreland Club, 59 South Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre, $170 per person, with entertainment by Eddie Day and TNT. Ticket information will be coming soon at fineartsfiesta.org/.

KINGSTON/ WEST SIDE

Fat Tuesday menu, with comfort food such as Jambalaya and hot dogs served 4 to 7 p.m. Feb. 17 by Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 644, Swoyersville. We will also serve our Lenten Dinners from 4 to 7 p.m. on Feb. 20 and every other Friday during Lent. Menus change weekly, so check our Facebook page for updates.

Ash Wednesday Food Sale at Good Shepherd Polish National Catholic Church, 269 E. Main St, Plymouth, 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 18. Eat in or take out. Fish Sandwiches, Potato Pancakes, Haluski with homemade noodles, potato cheese pierogi, and red or white clam chowder.

Halushki sale at St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, 321 Chestnut St., Kingston, with pick up 4 to 6 p.m. Feb. 20 in the school hall. This event is pre-order only. Orders must be placed by Feb. 13. Call or text 570-891-8026.

GREATER PITTSTON

Valentine's Day Party at Dupont VFW Post 4909, doors open at 4:30 p.m. Feb. 14; dinner is served at 6 p.m., followed by music from 7 to 10 p.m. $30 per person. A cash bar will be open 4:30 to 10 p.m. for mixed drinks, wine, beer, bottled water and soda. For reservations, call Bob Lopata at 570-472-1152

An Evening of Anthracite Region Music, 4 to 6 p.m. Feb. 15, Susquehanna Brewing Co., Pittston, with performers Don Shappelle and the Pickups; Doug Smith's Dixieland All-Stars; The Pennsylvania Coal Miners — A Tribute to John Stanky. Free admission, refreshments available.

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 pre-event 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 meetings will resume at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 10 and 24 at the American Legion, 1550 Henry Drive, Mountain Top, PA. The parking and entrance are at the rear of the building. For more club information, call Ady Burner, President, at 347-397-8356, and for trip information, call Delores Kelly Zajac at 732-690-9609.

NANTICOKE

Faculty & Alumni Art Exhibition runs through Feb. 20 at the Schulman Gallery, Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke. The snow date is Monday, Jan. 26.

See WHAT'S UP | 5C

JUMBLE®

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CGAOR

AHNEV

LYWOLE

DISEBE



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: ( ) " ( ) ( ) "

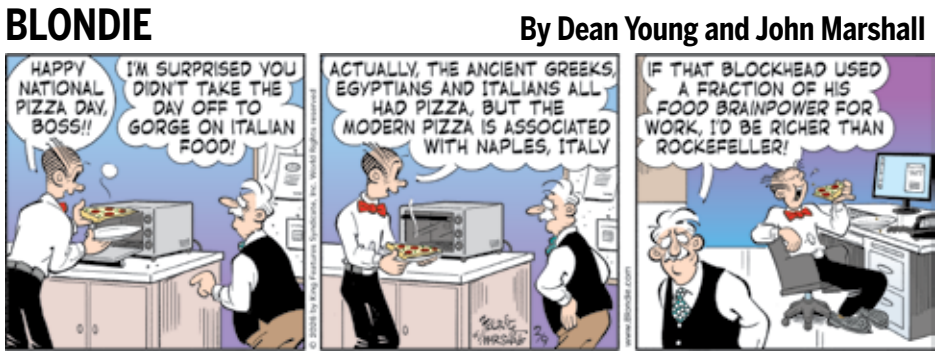
(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: ANNOY LOOPY MUTTER ODDITY
Answer: After loading his saw, hammer, etc. into his truck, the carpenter decided to — TOOL AROUND

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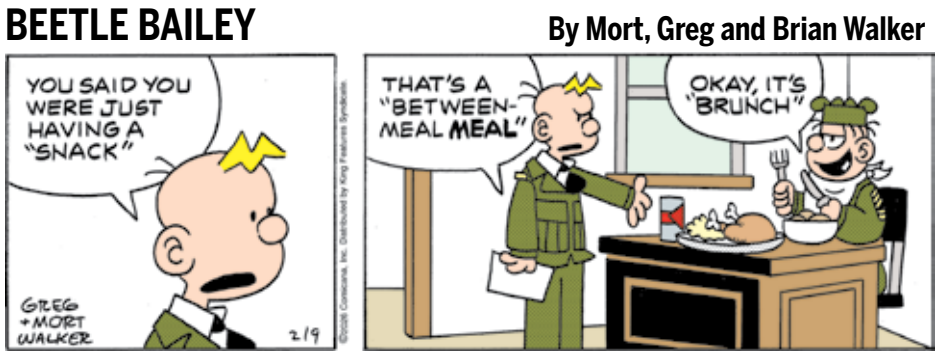
BLONDIE

By Dean Young and John Marshall



BEETLE BAILEY

By Mort, Greg and Brian Walker



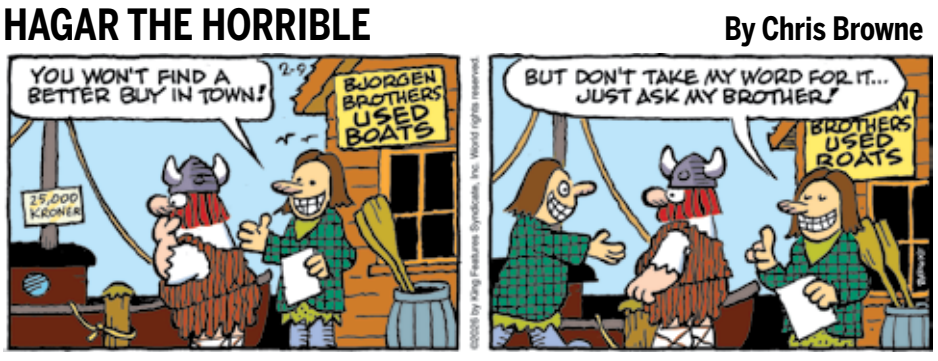
MACANUDO

By Liniers



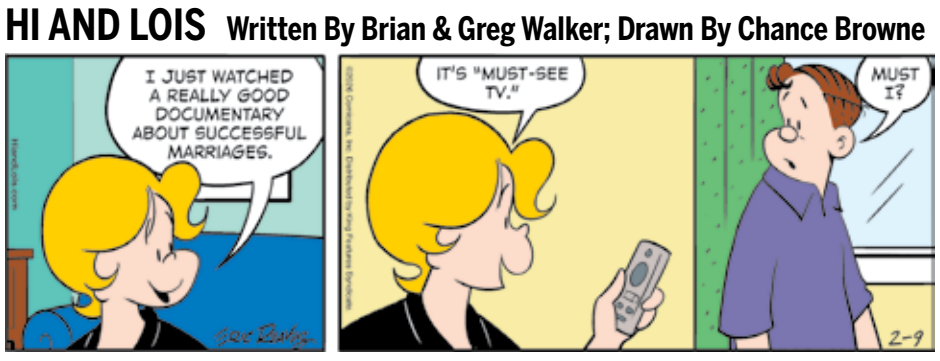
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

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



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

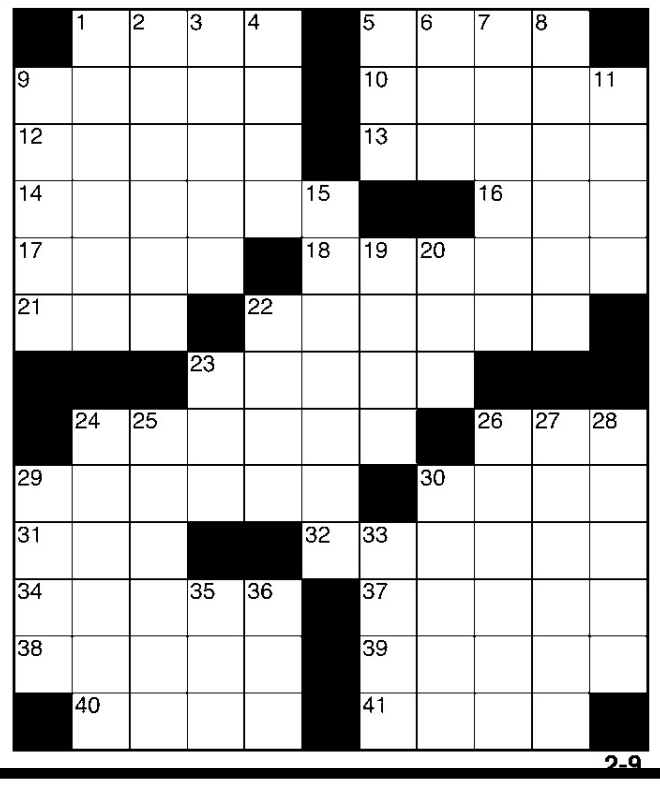
1 Stand against
5 Deck unit
9 Writer Levi
10 Met show
12 Quiver unit
13 Himalayan land
14 Free-for-alls
16 Lamb's mother
17 Eye part
18 Medicine bottles
21 Finish
22 Gains by force
23 Scarlett's last name
24 Flings
26 Quarter-back Marino
29 Clan-based
30 Song sung singly
31 Acorn source
32 Shoulder warmers
34 Cuss
37 "Tomor-row" musical
38 Bad time for a batter
39 Spirited horse
40 Junk email
41 Challeng-ing

DOWN

1 "Black Swan" director Aronofsky
2 Gofer's job
3 Currents
4 Mournful cry
5 Swindle
6 Gorilla, for one
7 Iterate
8 Speaks like a South-erner
9 Elevator lifter
11 Pub pints
15 Stretches out
19 That woman's
20 "Patience — virtue"
22 Horse halter
23 Sphere
24 Fishes with a net
25 Lift
26 Depress-ing topic
27 In cahoots
28 Was a snoop
29 Throw
30 Blitzen's boss
33 Diner dish
35 Dr.'s org.
36 LP speed unit

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

Saturday's answer



2-9

BABY BLUES

By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



PARDON MY PLANET

By Vic Lee



CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

by Dave Green

King Classic Sudoku

	3	4			1			
7					2			8
2	6		7	5			3	
		9	5		3		2	
4		2				3	1	6
	7			1			5	
3	4			2	6			
9		6	4	3	5	2		
	2	5	1	9			4	

Difficulty: ★ 2/9

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Today's Solution

Difficulty: ★ 2/9

8	2	5	1	9	7	6	4	3
9	1	6	4	3	5	2	8	7
3	4	7	8	2	6	1	9	5
6	7	3	2	1	4	8	5	9
4	5	2	9	7	8	3	1	6
1	8	9	5	6	3	7	2	4
2	6	8	7	5	9	4	3	1
7	9	1	3	4	2	5	6	8
5	3	4	6	8	1	9	7	2

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Hank Ketcham's

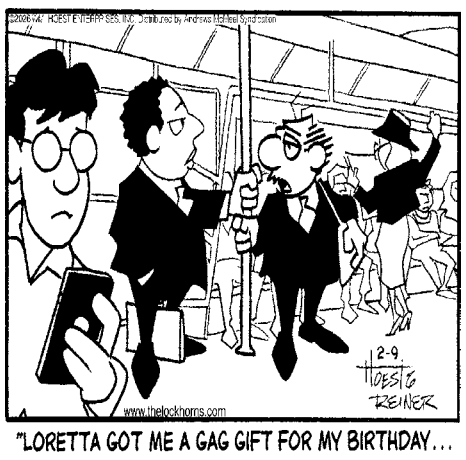
DENNIS THE MENACE



"WINNING OR LOSING ISN'T THE POINT OF PLAYING...UNLESS IT'S THE SUPER BOWL!"

THE LOCKHORNS

By Bunny Hoest & John Reiner



"LORETTA GOT ME A GAG GIFT FOR MY BIRTHDAY... SHE BAKED ME A CAKE."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil and Jeff Keane



"And to think this all started with one flake!"



Having A Yard Sale?

Call your classified department to schedule your ad today!

Showing up sick is selfish, not brave



Dear Annie
Annie Lane

Dear Annie: I genuinely like my job and most of the people I work with. We are a small office, so we see a lot of each other, share the same kitchen and bump into one another all day long. Normally that is fine, but lately one co-worker has turned cold and flu season into his own personal hobby.

I will call him "Carl." Carl has a special talent for showing up to work obviously sick and acting as if it is a virtue. It starts with a little sniffle and a bright announcement that he is "totally fine." By the next day he is coughing constantly, his voice is scratchy, his eyes look watery and he is still insisting it is allergies or "just a little thing."

He is also very social when he is sick. He loves stopping by desks to chat. He leans in to show you something on his phone. He offers to help by borrowing your stapler or hovering over your computer screen. Then he coughs into his hand and touches the office door handle, the coffee pot and the communal pen like he is trying to make sure his germs have a full social life, too.

A few of us have tried gentle hints. We have asked if he is feeling OK. We have mentioned that we can work from home. We have said, politely, that we would really rather not catch whatever he has. Carl just laughs and says he never takes sick days and that he is "toughing it out." He talks about it like it is an achievement, which makes it even harder to respond without sounding like a scold.

I do not want to embarrass him, and I do not want to create tension in a small workplace. At the same time, I am tired of worrying every time he walks past my desk. We have co-workers with kids and older parents. We also have one colleague who is immunocompromised, and watching Carl stroll in coughing and cheerful feels less like dedication and more like carelessness.

What is the best way to address this directly while keeping things civil? Is there a line I can use that is firm but not harsh, maybe with a touch of humor? And if he brushes it off again, is it reasonable to bring this to a manager or HR, or will I look petty for simply wanting a healthier office? – Holding My Breath at Work

Dear Holding My Breath at Work: You are not petty. You are trying to keep yourself and your co-workers healthy, and that is basic courtesy in a shared workplace.

Skip giving hints and be kind and direct. The next time Carl comes in clearly sick, say something simple and calm, privately if you can. Try, "I hope you feel better, but I need to ask you to work from home when you are coughing and symptomatic. I really cannot afford to catch this." If you want a light touch, you can add, "I like you, Carl, but I do not want to share your germs."

If he brushes you off, bring it to your manager, not as a complaint about Carl's character but as a request for a clear office expectation. Frame it around protecting the team, especially vulnerable co-workers. A good workplace can be compassionate about illness and still have standards.

"Out of Bounds: Estrangement, Boundaries and the Search for Forgiveness" is out now! Annie Lane's third anthology is for anyone who has lived with anger, estrangement or the deep ache of being wronged -- because forgiveness isn't for them. It's for you. Visit http://www.creatorspublishing.com for more information. Follow Annie Lane on Instagram at @dearannieofficial. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

HOROSCOPE

Moon Alert: Avoid shopping (except for food and gas) or making important decisions from 10:45 p.m. to 11:45 p.m. PST tonight. The Moon is in SCORPIO.

Happy Birthday for Monday, Feb. 9, 2026:

You are optimistic and helpful to others. You're devoted, insightful, caring and self-sacrificing. Socialize and enjoy life this year, because your creativity and zest are at a pinnacle! Nurture the happiness and beauty you have within yourself. Let your guard down and loosen up a bit.

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)
★★★ Be careful with financial discussions today. Something unexpected might catch you off guard. Double-check banking details and arrangements about debt, inheritances and shared property. However, a back-channel contact could provide long-term practical benefits. Tonight: Check your finances.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Be prepared to cooperate with others today because the Moon is opposite your sign. Fortunately, a discussion with an older friend or a senior member of a group might benefit you. Guard against knee-jerk reactions with someone, especially if they surprise you. (You're a bit rebellious and opinionated today.) Tonight: Listen.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ Your work routine might be interrupted today with a minor delay, or perhaps something more serious -- a power outage, staff shortage or late deliveries. Fortunately, this is a strong day to talk to parents, bosses and VIPs about what you want now and in the future. Tonight: Get organized.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Parents should be vigilant when dealing with their kids today because this is a mildly accident-prone day for your kids. Meanwhile, social occasions might suddenly change or be canceled. Alternatively, an unexpected creative opportunity might fall in your lap. Yay! Tonight: Socialize.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ Small appliances might break down today or minor breakages could occur -- something will interrupt your home routine. Nevertheless, a solid discussion with someone older about financial support or practical help will benefit you. Be open to proposals. Tonight: Cocoon at home.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Pay attention to everything you say and do today because this is a mildly accident-prone day for you. Give yourself extra time for wiggle room to deal with the unexpected. On the upside, you might have some brilliant, original ideas. Listen to someone older or more experienced; they might help you. Tonight: A conversation.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Keep an eye on your finances and possessions to avoid loss, theft or damage, because something unexpected might happen.

See HOROSCOPE | 5C

WORD SLEUTH • — BUCKET

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

Saturday's unlisted clue: SIDE

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.
Monday's unlisted clue hint: STAINLESS — BUCKET

Clamshell, Coal, Collapsible, Dinner, Drag, Dredging, Excavator, Fire, Ice, Kicking the Mop, Plastic, Rust, Water, Wine

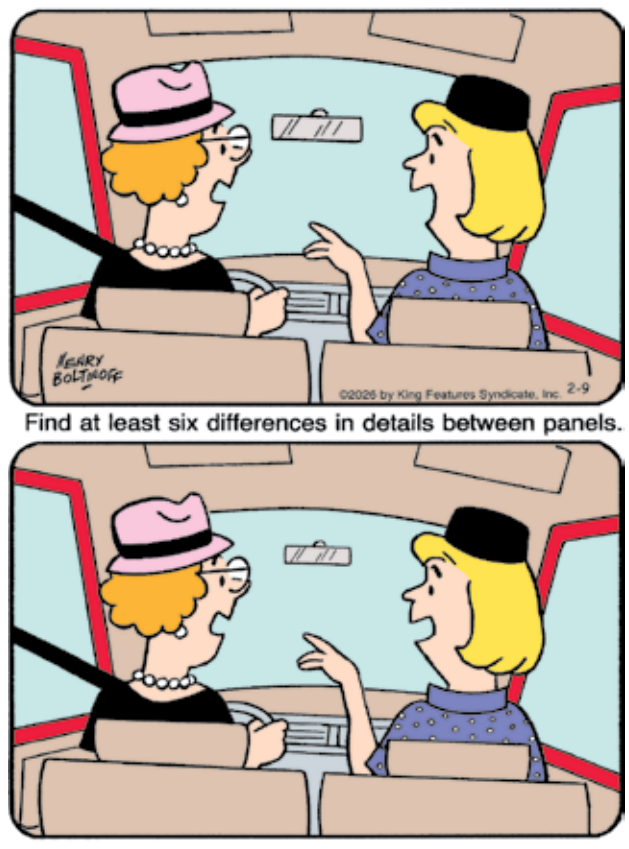
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2-9 CRYPTOQUIP

MKLF AD KM AOMJOMP DKQL KMOLKZ XVA TVAXT EVFMALFMKZ TJOZZ KW KQWOTWOU EKOMWOMP: EOPUKTTA.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: FILM ABOUT A DICTIONARY THAT'S GOT A WHOLE BUNCH OF COMMON WORDS OMITTED: "ABRIDGED TOO FAR."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals G



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is longer. 2. Mirror is smaller. 3. Visor is moved. 4. Headrest is smaller. 5. Mouth is different. 6. Top of windshield is lower.

MONDAY EVENING — FEBRUARY 9, 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.	American Idol "903 (Auditions)" (N) (TVPG)				The Rookie (N) (TV14)	
WNEP2 16.2	3's Comp.	3's Company	B. Miller	B. Miller	One Day	One Day	Jeffersons	Jeffersons	News (N)	Sanford
WYOU 22	28/22 News	CBS-News	28/22 News	ET (N)	Survivor (TVPG)		FBI "Parental" (TV14)		FBI "Fadeaway" (TV14)	
WBRE 28	News (N)	NBC News	Wheel (N)	Jeopardy!	Olympics Figure Skating, Freestyle Skiing, Alpine Skiing: Primetime in Milan (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)	FamFeud (N)	Wild Cards (TV14)		Wild Cards (TV14)		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)		VIA Short	VIA Short	Antiques (N) (TVG)		Antiques Roadshow (TVG)		Independ. (N) (TVPG)	
WQMY 53	TMZ (N)	Extra (N)	Dateline (TV14)		Law-SVU "Consent" (TV14)		Law-SVU "Abuse" (TV14)		Dateline (TVPG)	
WOLF 56	Last Man	Mod Fam	Big Bang	Big Bang	Extracted (N) (TV14)		Memory (N) (TV14)		News First at Ten (L) (N)	
WQPX 64	Blue Bloods (TV14)		Chicago P.D. (TV14)		Chicago "Closure" (TV14)		Chicago "Rage" (TV14)		Chicago P.D. (TV14)	
KYW 3	News (N)	CBS-News	Inside Ed.	ET (N)	Survivor (TVPG)		FBI "Parental" (TV14)		FBI "Fadeaway" (TV14)	
WWOR 9	Family Feud	Family Feud	FamFeud (N)	FamFeud (N)	The News on MY 9 (N)		Law-SVU "Abuse" (TV14)		Family Feud	Family Feud
WPXI 11	Channel 11	NBC News	Wheel (N)	Jeopardy!	Olympics Figure Skating, Freestyle Skiing, Alpine Skiing: Primetime in Milan (L) (N)					
WPHL 17	Goldbergs	Big Bang	Big Bang	Mod Fam	Wild Cards (TV14)		Wild Cards (TV14)		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	Live PD: Great. (TV14)		Live PD: Great. (TV14)		Live PD: Great. (TV14)		Live PD: Great. (N) (TV14)		Live PD: Great. (N) (TV14)	
AMC	(4:00) The Perfect Storm		★★ San Andreas ('15) Dwayne Johnson. (TVPG)					(:45) ★★ The Mummy ('99) (TVPG)		
BBCA	Movie		★★ Beverly Hills Cop II ('87) Eddie Murphy. (TVG)			★★ Major League ('89) Tom Berenger. (TVG)				
BRAVO	Below Deck Down (TV14)		Below Deck Down (TV14)		Below Deck (N) (TV14)		WatchWhat	(:45) Below Deck Down Under (TV14)		
CNBC	5:00 Olympics	2026 Milan Cortina Olympics			Shark Tank (TVPG)		Shark Tank (TVPG)		Shark Tank (TVPG)	
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	4:40 The Little Mermaid		Iwájú (N)	Iwájú	(:15) Phineas	Zombies	(:20) Zombies	:25 ZOMBIES	Kiff	Kiff
E!	4:30 Sister Act 2: Back in ...		★★ Sister Act ('92) Whoopi Goldberg. (TVG)					Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit (TVG)		
ESPN	SportsCenter		College Basketball NC State at Louisville (L) (N)				College Basketball Arizona at Kansas (L) (N)			
ESPN2	Pardon (N)	Overreact	TGL Golf The Bay Golf Club vs. Los Angeles Golf Club (N)				Wm. Basketball Oklahoma at Vanderbilt (L) (N)			
FNC	Special Report (L) (N)		The Ingraham Angle (L) (N)		Jesse Watters (L) (N)		Hannity (L) (N)		Gutfeld! (N)	
FOOD	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Baking Championship (N)		Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby
FREE	★★ Sweet Home Alabama ('02) Reese Witherspoon. (TVG)					★★ The Proposal ('09) Sandra Bullock. (TVG)				
FS1	Hoops (N)	College Basketball Xavier at St. John's (L) (N)				College Basketball Oregon at Indiana (L) (N)				Hoops (N)
FX	(5:00) ★★★ The Hate U Give ('18) (TVG)				★★★ The Help ('11) Viola Davis. (TVG)					
FXM	(5:15) No Hard Feelings		(:10) ★★ Let's Be Cops ('14) Jake Johnson. (TVPG)				(:05) ★★ Let's Be Cops ('14) Jake Johnson. (TVPG)			
HALL	The Wish Swap ('25) Emily Tennant.				The Story of Us ('19) Maggie Lawson. (TVG)				Golden Girls	Golden Girls
HGTV	Love It or List It (TVPG)		Love It or List It (TVG)		Don't Hate Your (N) (TVG)		Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters
HIST	History's-Mysteries (TVPG)		History's-Mysteries (TVPG)		History's-Mysteries (TVPG)		Mysteries (N) (TVPG)		(:05) History's "Islands" (N)	
LIFE	NCIS (TV14)		NCIS (TV14)		NCIS (TVPG)		NCIS "Endgame" (TV14)		(:05) NCIS (TV14)	
MTV	Big Bang	Big Bang	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Ridiculous
NBCSP	Birds (N)	Hobby	Unfiltered with Ricky Bo and Bill Colarulo				Birds Huddle	Sixers (N)	NBA Basketball	
NGEO	Lost Treasures of Rome		Lost Treasures of Rome		Lost "Nero's Lost Palace"		Lost Treasures of Rome		Lost Treasures of Rome	
NICK	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Big Bang	:40 Big Bang
OVA	(4:30) Midsomer (TVPG)		Murdoch Mysteries (TVPG)		Murdoch Mysteries (TVPG)		Murdoch Mysteries (TVPG)		Murdoch Mysteries (TVPG)	
PARMT	★★★ Scream ('96) Neve Campbell. (TVPG)					★★★ Scream 2 ('97) David Arquette. (TVPG)				
SYFY	4:30 Boss Baby: Family B...		★★ Scooby-Doo ('02) Freddie Prinze. (TVG)				★★★ Puss in Boots: The Last Wish ('22) (TVG)			
TBS	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang
TCM	(:15) ★★★ Seven Sweethearts ('42) Kathryn Grayson.				★★★ The Smiling Lieutenant (TVG)			(:45) ★★ Broken Lullaby ('32)		
TLC	90 Day: Single Life (TV14)		90 Day: Single Life (TV14)		90 Day "The Art of the Love Bomb" (N) (TVMA)				(:05) 90 Day (N) (TV14)	
TNT	(4:00) ★★ The Flash ('23)		Unrivaled	Unrivaled Basketball		(:45) Unrivaled Basketball			Unrivaled	Movie
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	5:30 Olympics	(:45) 2026 Milan Cortina Olympics			Olympics	(:45) 2026 Milan Cortina Olympics			(:15) 2026 Olympics	
VH1	My Wife	My Wife	My Wife	My Wife	★★ Soul Men ('08) Samuel L. Jackson.				Coming to America	
WE	Criminal "Coda" (TVPG)		Criminal "Valhalla" (TV14)		Criminal "Lauren" (TV14)		Criminal Minds (TV14)		Criminal Minds (TV14)	
YOUTOO	Adventur	Adventur	Daily Flash		World Chase Tag		Bare Knuckle (TVG)		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	5:25 If I Had Legs I'd Kick...		(:20) A Knight (TV14)		Industry (TVMA)		★★★ Sorry, Baby ('25) (TV14)			:45 A Knight
HBO2	5:25 Industry	:25 A Knight	(:05) ★★★ Life of Pi ('12) Suraj Sharma. (TVG)				:15 A Knight	(:50) ★★★ The Shape of Water (TVPG)		
MAX	★ Stonewall ('15) Jeremy Irvine. (TVPG)				(:10) Knox Goes Away ('23) Michael Keaton.				(:05) Janet Planet ('23)	
MMAX	(5:45) ★★ The Wolfman ('10) (TVPG)		Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter				(:15) ★★★ Kong: Skull Island ('17) (TVG)			
SHOW	(5:00) Baby Driver		★★ American Assassin ('17) Dylan O'Brien. (TVPG)				Coldwater		School Spirits (N) (TVMA)	
STARZ	(:10) Trouble Man ('25)			(:45) ★ Shadow Force ('25) Kerry Washington. (TV14)				BMF Docu	Nowhere	:50 Spartacus

Stains on napkins are memories



Hints from Heloise
Heloise

Dear Heloise: I am a 75-year-old woman who enjoys setting a pretty table for special holidays, and I like using cloth napkins on such occasions. I have no biological children but frequently entertain nieces, nephews, and other family members and friends. Usually, most of them set the cloth napkin (which is secured in a holiday-themed napkin ring) aside for fear of staining it.

This past Thanksgiving, I asked then to "humor me" by actually removing the napkin ring, placing the napkins on their laps, and wiping their mouths with it if need be. I told them that any stains would be a wonderful future reminder of our gathering.

They willingly complied and used them at our recent Christmas gathering at my home without being asked. This brings me joy, and at my age, who knows how many years I have left to enjoy setting up special meals! My family means more to me than any stain on a napkin! -- Cathie D., in Lisbon, Ohio

SEND A GREAT HINT TO:
Heloise@Heloise.com

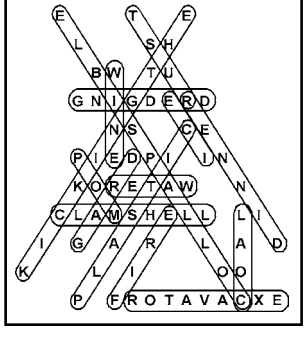
EVEN SHEETS
Dear Heloise: As a widower who has been living alone for the past 18 years, I have a suggestion for the bedsheet industry that I'd like your opinion on.

As anyone who has ever had to make their bed alone can tell you, the most time-consuming part is centering the top sheet. The fitted bottom sheet centers itself naturally, while the top sheet can require multiple trips around the bed until it passes the eyeball test of having an equal amount of overhang for the entire length of the bed on both sides.

Since sheets are sold by the bed size, and each mattress size has a specific width, it would be helpful if the top sheet had a pair of seams or some other unobtrusive marking that ran the length of the top sheet at the width of the bed size (i.e., 60 inches apart for a queen-sized bed).

See HINTS | 5C

Today's Answers
— BUCKET



Hints

From page 4C

Once the top sheet was lined up with the top of the mattress, centering the sheet would only require that you pull the sheet from one side until the seam lined up with the edge of the mattress, then walk around to the other side and pull the sheet until the other seam reached the edge of the mattress. And voila, you are ready to tuck! No more playing ring-around-the-mattress to center your sheet.

What do you think? Am I making a mountain out of a molehill? -- Sal R., via email

Sal, do what most people do and just measure with your eyes. It doesn't have to be exactly the same number of inches on both sides. If manufacturers had to devise some way to get the top sheet perfectly even on both sides, you can bet the price of sheets would increase significantly. Frankly, I think sheets are expensive enough already. -- Heloise

What a Chore

Dear Heloise: To the lady who hates dryer sheets, you can buy them without fragrance. And who irons pillowcases? -- Ron T., via email

Ron, I iron my pillowcases, and there are many people like me who iron more than just their pillowcases. Actually, I find ironing relaxing, but I hate unloading the dishwasher.

Readers, is there any chore you secretly enjoy and one you don't like to do? Write and let us know here at Heloise Central (Heloise@Heloise.com). -- Heloise

Horoscope

From page 4C

Fortunately, a realistic discussion with someone about your job or your health can go well. You'll welcome some practical and immediate answers. Tonight: Check your belongings.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Don't push yourself too much today. Be pleased with whatever you can accomplish. Fortunately, with the Moon in your sign today, you can ask for what you want. You feel a bit excited and stimulated today, which is why you might be attracted to people who are different. Tonight: You're strong.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ It's a fast-paced day, but you might choose to be low-key or work alone or behind the scenes. Home repairs, as well as ideas about making where you live look more attractive, will appeal to you. If you have to convince someone about something today, you'll do it! Tonight: Enjoy privacy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ A relationship with a friend or a group might hold some surprises for you today. Avoid conflict. Don't overreact to something you didn't expect. In fact, a serious discussion about future plans will help you today. When the dust settle, look for something that you want. Tonight: Friendships.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ With both the Sun and Mars in your sign, your energy is strong today. You also have great moneymaking ideas and might be interested in buying beautiful things for yourself and loved ones. Do know that you're high-viz. People notice you. Don't do something impulsive that you might later regret. Tonight: You're admired.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Travel plans might be canceled or delayed today. Or perhaps you have to travel when you didn't expect to do so. Serious discussions about further education, publishing, medicine or the law will be productive. This is also a great time to shop for wardrobe goodies, including shoes and boots. Tonight: Explore and learn!

BORN TODAY

Actor Michael B. Jordan (1987), singer-songwriter Carole King (1942), actor Tom Hiddleston (1981)

MOVIE REVIEW

Caleb Landry Jones is a lovesick vampire with a fabulous wig in Besson's 'Dracula'

By Jocelyn Noveck
AP National Writer



Vertical Entertainment via AP

This image released by Vertical Entertainment shows Matilda De Angelis, from left, Zoë Bleu, and Caleb Landry Jones in a scene from 'Dracula.'

"I haven't eaten in centuries," says the stooped, wrinkled man knocking at a convent door, seeking food and shelter.

LOL! It's a funny line, given that this is a disguised Count Dracula — who indeed has not eaten in centuries, unless you count human blood. And it's especially funny given that "Dracula" is not now, nor has ever been, a comedy.

But the humor's a nice touch, as are the splashes of color, the lovely 19th-century gowns, the rendering of Parisian salons and vivid street celebrations that are part of Luc Besson's reimagining of the oft-told tale (more like the told-all-the-time tale), starring Caleb Landry Jones. And yes, the story of Dracula is not usually set in Paris. There's a lot that's familiar in this version, but enough variety, panache and bravado to raise it up a notch and give it, well, a raison d'être.

Writer-director Besson's calling card is romance — the original title was "Dracula: A Love Tale" — and, maybe more to the point, sex. Unlike Robert Eggers' 2024 "Nosferatu," which was beautiful but bleak to look at and featured an ugly, fearsome vampire, Besson imbues his main character with a swashbuckling sexiness that suits his star's craggy appeal.

Which is why, even when he's aged four whole centuries, a pack of nuns at the convent can't resist climbing all over Dracula, presenting their necks for the taking. He may be wrinkled, but he's wearing a homemade scent they can't resist — no women can, even nuns.

But we begin back in the year 1480, in a remote castle, where a handsome prince — Vlad's his name, for now — is frolicking in the bedroom with beautiful bride Elisabeta (Zoë Bleu). Their playtime is stopped suddenly by Vlad's men: War is at hand, and it's time to fight.



Vertical Entertainment via AP

This image released by Vertical Entertainment shows Caleb Landry Jones in a scene from 'Dracula.'

Vlad's main concern is his wife. He asks the Orthodox priest to swear that God will protect the life of Elisabeta — after all, they're fighting in God's name. Alas, escaping through the forest in the snow, Elisabeta is killed in an ambush. A grief-stricken Vlad returns to kill the priest with his cross, renounce God, damn heaven — and is thus cursed with immortal life. A life he will spend trying to find his wife, reincarnated.

Four hundred years later, Vlad, now Count Dracula, resides — shriveled but stylish, with an incredible flowing, white wig that looks like something Elvis might have worn if he were a 400-year-old vampire — in the Carpathian Mountains. But the action shifts to Paris, mainly just because Besson loves Paris, where citizens are joyously celebrating the centenary of the French Revolution.

Paris is also where we meet a prominent vampire-hunter from Bavaria — and unnamed priest — played by Christoph Waltz, who you might imagine is perfect for this role. Like Javert hunting Valjean in "Les Miserables," this priest is determined to find his prey, wherever that takes him.

And Dracula's on his own mission. In his gloomy castle, where he lives with a gaggle of CGI gargoyles, he prepares to kill a young solicitor (Ewens Abid) who came to see him about his property, hanging him upside down until the blood pools in his head.

But then he sees a picture of the frightened young man's intended, Mina, and becomes obsessed with finding her, certain she's his reincarnated bride. He spares the man's life and heads to Paris.

The scenes in the French capital are full of welcome color and life — everything from receptions in salons or at Versailles to a street carnival to a mermaid swimming in an aquarium — all chances to display sumptuous costumes by Corinne Bruand.

When, aided by one of his vampire followers, Maria (Matilda De Angelis), Dracula finds Mina — also played by Bleu (the real-life daughter of Rosanna Arquette) — he immediately knows she's his eternal love. Now, all he needs to do is win her heart, and get back to Transylvania to escape the vampire hunters. Luckily for him, he's looking good — those nuns at the convent gave him all the fresh blood he needed to look young and handsome again.

There are plenty of Bessonian flourishes along the way — those gargoyles sure are weird, and they don't remain gargoyles — but in the end, it's too bad there weren't even more, to further distinguish this "Dracula" telling from many before it. In any case it all leads to a fairly satisfying confrontation between Dracula and the priest, saved until the very end, a la Pacino and De Niro in "Heat."

Here, it's fun to watch Jones and Waltz sink their teeth — well for Jones, his fangs — into a story that's old as time, but can always use another fairly watchable remake.

"Dracula," a Vertical Entertainment release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for violence, some gore and sexuality." Running time: 129 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

What's up

From page 2C

BACK MOUNTAIN

Bingo Night at Northmoreland Volunteer Fire Co., 1618 Demunds Road, Centermoreland, 6:30 p.m. Feb. 16. No reservation is needed for Monday Night Bingo. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

A new Grief Share support group will begin at Cross Creek Community Church, 370 Carverton Road, Trucksville, 570-696-0399, on Jan. 14 and 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.

Catholic Choral Society annual Lenten Concert, 3 p.m. Sunday, March 1, Shavertown United Methodist Church, 163 North Pioneer Avenue, Shavertown, PA. In addition to the Choral Society, the concert will feature selections by the parish choir of Shavertown Methodist Church, directed by Nancy Evans. Ann Manganello is the music director of the Catholic Choral Society and Linda Houck is the accompanist. The concerts are open to the public free of charge. There will be a goodwill offering

Gate of Heaven Church will host World Day of Prayer at 1 p.m. Friday, March 6, in the church on Machell Avenue in Dallas. This year's program has been written by the women of Nigeria, built on the theme "I will give you rest: come." Refreshments will follow in the parish center. The church and Parish Center are handicapped-accessible through the entrances toward the rear of the church on either side. Christian women of various denominations from the Back Mountain are invited. If any woman would like to have a speaking part in the program, please contact Louise Roberts at 570-675-4237 or iamabooker@yahoo.com. We will need your contact info to arrange a practice session in late February.

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

St. John's Russian Orthodox Cathedral's homemade Pierogi sale, 11 a.m. Feb. 18, Ash Wednesday, until sold out, at St. John's Center, Hill Street, Mayfield. Homemade pierogi, deep-fried only, will be sold, $12 per dozen. No orders. First-come, first-served. Any questions, call St. John's Rectory at 570-876-0730, Mott at 570-335-2128 or Sandy at 570-876-3576.

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

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.

James M. Coughlin High School Class of 1966 will celebrate its 60th reunion from 1 to 6 p.m. Aug. 15 at American Grill, 1320 Wyoming Ave., Exeter. Please respond with any interest, questions or plans to attend to Marie Dorrance Hartz at 570-574-5744 or mariehartz@me.com. or to Joe Christopher at 570 706-1499 or thevoyager826@gmail.com. Or post to our Facebook page - Coughlin66.

TIMES LEADER'S WHAT'S UP NEPA



Sony Pictures Classics/A24/A24 via AP

This combination of images show promotional art for 'Blue Moon,' left, 'Eternity,' center, and 'Marty Supreme.'

What to Stream: Charli xcx, Timothée Chalamet in 'Marty Supreme,' Ethan Hawke, 'Cross' and Mario Tennis Fever

By The Associated Press



The Orchard/Atlantic via AP

This combination of images show album art for 'To Whom This May Concern' by Jill Scott, left, and 'Wuthering Heights' by Charli xcx.

Timothée Chalamet starring as a table tennis wizard in "Marty Supreme" and Charli xcx's soundtrack to Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" 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: Richard Linklater's deliciously wistful "Blue Moon" starring Ethan Hawke, Aldis Hodge returning for Season 2 of "Cross" and Nintendo may have its most frenetic tennis game yet with Mario Tennis Fever.

New movies to stream from Feb. 9-15

— Pull up a chair to listen to Ethan Hawke's Lorenz Hart hold court in Richard Linklater's deliciously wistful "Blue Moon" (Saturday, Feb. 14 on Netflix). Linklater's film spends one night with the celebrated lyricist who is watching his longtime songwriter partner, Richard Rodgers (Andrew Scott) move on with the premiere of "Oklahoma!" on Broadway. Hawke is nominated for best actor by the Oscars. In my review, I called Hawke's Hart "extraordinarily good company."

— The A24 romance "Eternity" (Friday, Feb. 13 on Apple TV) stars Elizabeth Olsen in an afterlife conundrum. In a kind of weigh-station purgatory, she must choose how to spend her afterlife, with her longtime husband (Miles Turner) or her first love (Callum Turner), who died in World War II. In her review, AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr called "Eternity" "imaginative and shrewdly whimsical with an utterly charming cast."

— Another A24 hit, "Marty Supreme," arrives on premium video-on-demand Feb. 10. It's the first chance to watch one of 2025's most acclaimed and Oscar-nominated movies at home. In her review, AP's Jocelyn Noveck called it "a nerve-busting adrenaline jolt of a movie." Timothée Chalamet stars as a 1950s shoe salesman in New York hellbent on becoming the top professional ping-pong player.

— *AP Film Writer Jake Coyle*

New music to stream from Feb. 9-15

— Patience is a virtue and time is luxury, particularly for those subject to the music industry. Luckily, Jill Scott, the once-in-a-generation R&B, neo-soul-and-then-some singer plays by her own rules. On Friday, she will release "To Whom This May Concern," her sixth studio album and first full-length project in a decade. Lead singles "Beautiful People" and "Pressha" make it clear that this a meditative release born of experience — lush production, live instrumentation and at its center, the intimacy of Scott's unmistakable voice like a musical north star. The album will also features Ab-Soul, J.I.D., Tierra Whack and Too $hort.

— Charli xcx's first full-length album since "Brat" summer came and went is the soundtrack to Emerald Fennell's starry adaptation of Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights," out Friday. It might be wise not to expect the neon-chartreuse of her rave work; the first taste came in the form of "House" featuring John Cale, an industrial, gothic introduction to the romance. That song, to quote Charli quoting Cale, is both "elegant and brutal." Other moments contain Charli's signatures: auto-tuned vocals, unexpected production, shackled pop hooks. If that resonates, begin with "Wall of Sound" and "Chains of Love."

— *AP Music Writer Maria Sherman*

New series to stream from Feb. 9-15

— Aldis Hodge is back as Alex Cross, the detective created by novelist James Patterson, in Season 2 of "Cross" for Prime Video. In the new episodes, Cross is on the case of a serial killer hunting corrupt billionaires. It drops Wednesday.

— *Alicia Rancilio*

New video games to play from Feb. 9-15

— While most of the world is watching the Winter Olympics, our friends in the Mushroom Kingdom are hitting the courts in Mario Tennis Fever. This could be Nintendo's most frenetic tennis game yet, thanks to "fever rackets" that let you uncork fireballs, lightning bolts, tornadoes and other effects against your opponents. You can play singles or doubles matches against friends, choosing from a cast of 38 favorites like Princess Peach, Donkey Kong and Yoshi. Or you can play solo in an adventure that turns Mario and company into babies who have to learn tennis skills before they can grow up. Opening serve comes Thursday, Feb. 12, on Switch 2.

— Tokyo's Grasshopper Manufacture has built a reputation over the years with extravagantly gory games like No More Heroes and Lollipop Chainsaw. Its latest is Romeo is a Dead Man, in which the studio promises "super bloody action" and "crazy twists and turns to blow players' minds." Romeo Stargazer is an FBI agent hunting fugitives across multiple universes after the space-time continuum collapses. He can wield swords, guns and more futuristic weapons, and he can summon small minions to attack en masse. And yes, there is a missing girlfriend named Juliet. These violent delights commence Wednesday, Feb. 11, on PlayStation 5, Xbox X/S and PC.

— *Lou Kesten*

Why Kristen Stewart just saved this historic LA theater

By Itzel Luna
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Kristen Stewart fears the death of classic Hollywood cinema.

As the actor-turned-director drove through the streets of Los Angeles and saw beloved local theaters replaced by major retail chains, she decided to help save theatergoing in the city that started it all.

So she bought a historic movie theater in L.A.

Stewart purchased and is restoring the Highland Theatre, a cultural landmark that once hosted vaudeville acts.

"When people are desperate, they start doing desperate things," Stewart said in an interview with Architectural Digest. "I think buying this theater feels a little desperate in like the most beautiful way."

The theater shut its doors nearly two years ago — less than a week short of its 100th anniversary. The owner, Dan Akarakian, told The Times in 2024 that the theater was unable to recover economically from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Everything that's already living here is so beautiful. It just needs to be like taken care of," Stewart said. "I mean, the place is falling down. We definitely need like a lot of help, but it's worth it."

The local film and TV industries in L.A. were struggling long before wildfires that ravaged the city early last year dealt another blow, halting production and threatening the homes of stars and crews alike.

Stewart, who first achieved international success with her role as Bella Swan in the "Twilight" saga, said movie theatergoing is becoming a lost art, as "people are watching movies on their tablets and their TVs and likely watching a couple of things at once." She and her peers struggled to get movies off the ground.

Stewart hopes the theater can become "a space that families can go and that also filmmakers can go and so we can kind of be in service of each other," she said. "We can be in actual communication with people and not cut off from each other."

The three-story building has theater rooms and venue space, ideal to host screenings and public community events, she said.

The theater was designed by architect Lewis Arthur Smith, known for other local theaters like the Vista in Los Feliz and El Portal in North Hollywood.

"It's an opportunity to make a space to gather and scheme and dream together," Stewart told AD. "This project is about creating a new school and restructuring our processes, finding a better way forward."

Stewart's effort to save local cinema comes on the heels of a coalition of filmmakers, led by "Juno" director Jason Reitman, purchasing the 93-year-old Village Theater in Westwood in 2024.

Oscar-winning writer-director Quentin Tarantino bought the Vista, also designed by Smith, in 2021. The theater reopened its doors over two years later.

Stewart, who was raised in the San Fernando Valley, has been a longstanding advocate of the L.A. community. She works closely with the Downtown Women's Center, which provides housing to homeless women.

The actor decried the lack of stories by and for women in Hollywood during her keynote speech at the annual Academy Women's Luncheon in November.

"I absolutely f— love this city," she said. "I like the spaciousness. You can decide how you want to fill it."

Renée Fleming, Béla Fleck to perform together at Carnegie Hall after dropping out of Kennedy Center

By Ronald Blum
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Renée Fleming and Béla Fleck, who both dropped out of Kennedy Center appearances after President Donald Trump took over the venue, will give a joint concert at Carnegie Hall as part of a 2026-27 season that also will include a Philip Glass symphony he withdrew from the National Symphony Orchestra.

The season also will feature the venue's first complete performance of Wagner's Ring Cycle.

Fleming and Fleck will present an evening of Appalachian folk music on Dec. 3, Carnegie announced Thursday. Plans for the program began in 2025, before they withdrew last month from Kennedy Center appearances.

Fleming and Fleck also are scheduled to perform the program this May 23 at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, and are discussing other possible cities.

Gianandrea Noseda, whose National Symphony appears displaced by Trump abruptly shuttering the Kennedy Center for a two-year reconstruction, will lead the Zurich Opera orchestra in concert performances of the four-opera "Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring of the Nibelung)" from March 18-23. The only previous Ring operas presented in their entirety at Carnegie have been "Das Rheingold" and "Die Walküre"

"It's fantastic that with this project we will do something historically important," Noseda said. "Of course you miss the visual aspect but you can get probably more precise musical performances because everybody's focused without movements, without costumes, without lighting."

Noseda conducted staged Rings in 2024 at the Zurich Opera. He is music director there as well as with the NSO, which is searching for a space to play while the Kennedy Center is closed.

"We are working on it," he said.

Glass' Symphony No 15 "Lincoln" will be played by the Orchestra of St. Luke's on Jan. 31. Commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra, it had been scheduled for its world premiere at the Kennedy Center on June 12 before Glass withdrew it last month, writing "the values of the Kennedy Center today are in direct conflict with the message of the symphony."

Carnegie Hall said the work will premiere elsewhere before the New York performance.

Carnegie's season opens Oct. 8 with the Berlin Philharmonic, led by chief conductor Kirill Petrenko in a program featuring tenor Jonas Kaufmann.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin will conduct all nine of Mahler's completed symphonies with the Vienna Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera orchestra. No. 8, known as "Symphony of a Thousand" will be performed three times from June 10-12, 2027, with a chorus of 350 and orchestra of 126, taking place at the Met rather than Carnegie.



AP File Photo
Singer Renee Fleming speaks after receiving a Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Jan. 16, 2023.



Chris Harris | A24 via AP
This image released by A24 shows Harry Melling, left, and Alexander Skarsgård in a scene from 'Pillion.'

MOVIE REVIEW

In submission romance 'Pillion,' BDSM meets barbershop quartet

By Jake Coyle
AP Film Writer



Chris Harris | A24 via AP
This image released by A24 shows Harry Melling in a scene from 'Pillion.'

"Do you give?"

It can be a pertinent question in any relationship, but it's a particularly poignant one for the BDSM couple of Harry Lighton's kink-friendly, disarmingly affecting romance "Pillion."

Like most lovers, Colin (Harry Melling) and Ray (Alexander Skarsgård) have an understanding. OK, sure. Their lines are a little more firmly drawn than most. Colin does all the cooking, sleeps on the floor and wears a locked chair around his neck. (Ray keeps the key around his.) You could say the power balance isn't quite equitable.

Basically, Colin does whatever Ray wants him to, and is happy doing it. There is, as you might expect, not a small amount of leather involved. Judge if you must, but the arrangement seems to work for them.

Even among the many odd couples to grace our movie screens, Ray and Colin are a singular duo. Fay Wray and King Kong had more in common. Colin is a meek and accommodating parking enforcement officer in Bromley who lives with his parents (Lesley Sharp, Douglas Hodge) and sings in a barbershop quartet. Ray is a mysterious, terse and deadly handsome motorcyclist.

If you're wondering how they could have ever come together — most people who encounter them do — "Pillion" begins with a very memorable meet-cute — memorable because their coming together is almost the exact inverse of romantic-comedy fantasy.

Colin is on the way to a barbershop performance when, from the backseat of a moving car, his eye catches a blur going past. Betty Curtis' "Chariot" swoons on the radio. Later in the pub, they don't actually meet or even lock eyes, but Ray leaves a note to meet up, on Christmas. The date, if you can call it that, is brief. Ray says hardly a word, but Colin follows him into a dark alley. Licking of boots, and more, ensues.

"What am I going to do with you?" says Ray afterward.

"Whatever you want, really," replies Colin, without a trace of guile or shame.

When Colin returns home, his parents are eager for details. "Nice chap?" his dad asks.

It's a question that hovers over "Pillion," which very much takes Colin's perspective as their relationship deepens — or at least becomes more codified. Ray says virtually nothing to Colin that isn't a command. You'd say he treats him like a dog, but Ray at least lets his dog sit on the couch.

We wait for either Colin to break, or Ray's imperial reign to soften. But it's also clear that Colin is quite happy. Submissiveness comes naturally to him. He cheerfully quotes Ray telling him he has "an aptitude for devotion." When he clings to Ray's back on his motorcycle, Colin looks downright blissful. When Ray makes him wrestle, he quickly dominates Colin. Does he give? Happily.

The power struggle, or surrender, of "Pillion" makes it perhaps our first "dom-com." (It's also, somewhat hysterically, the second domination-themed release from A24, following 2024's "Babygirl.") But what makes "Pillion," Lighton's first feature, such a bewitching experience is its lightness. It's based on Adam Mars-Jones' "Box Hill," but Lighton's film largely avoids the darker, abusive turns of the novel. Lighton is more keen to enjoy the unfolding dynamics of a relationship in the extreme, one that ultimately, like any other, is guided by needs and wants.

And the performances are uncanny. Skarsgård's Ray is swaggeringly impervious, with only the most subtle hints of sensitivity. But the movie belongs to Melling. The former "Harry Potter" actor has always had an uniquely beguiling presence. I think of him most in the Coen brothers' "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs," shorn of all appendages yet still so powerfully arresting with those melancholic eyes. In "Pillion," it's the way that Melling so goofily and sweetly takes to his new role with Colin that makes the film both quite comic and curiously moving.

It's a funny movie; there are countless moments, like that "Nice chap?" line, primed for laughter. But it's also, especially for a film that's drawn headlines for its explicitness, a strangely touching one. "Pillion" has been billed, a little tongue-in-cheek, as a love story, timed to Valentine's Day. But it's more like a sexual coming of age, one where even a submissive like Colin that you can't always give.

"Pillion," an A24 release in theaters Friday and nationwide Feb. 20, is not yet rated by the Motion Picture Association but contains explicit sex scene. Running time: 106 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Actor Michael Keaton honored as Man of the Year by Harvard's Hasty Pudding theater group

By Michael Casey and Leah Willingham
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Actor Michael Keaton jousted with an Oscar statue and made burgers Friday night as he was roasted before receiving the 2026 Man of the Year by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals.

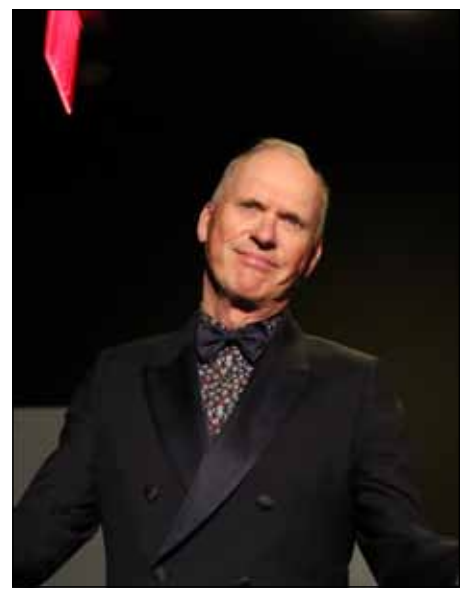
The theater group, which dates to 1844 and claims to be the world's third-oldest still operating, presented Keaton with his Pudding Pot award during the evening celebration. Afterward he attended a performance of Hasty Pudding's 177th production, "Salooney Tunes."

Hasty Pudding Theatricals gives out its Man and Woman of the Year awards to people who have made lasting and impressive contributions to the world of entertainment.

Keaton, an Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning actor, is known for roles in such films as "Batman," "Birdman," "Beetlejuice" and "Spotlight." More recently he starred in and directed the short film "Sweetwater" and starred in and was executive producer on the eight-part Hulu miniseries "Dopesick."

The ceremony opened with Keaton donning a Batman costume and chasing after an Oscar statue — a nod to the fact he never won one, though he was nominated in 2015 for "Birdman."

See KEATON | 8C



AP Photo
Actor Michael Keaton arrives at Harvard University's Farkas Hall for the school's annual Hasty Pudding Theatricals Man of the Year award show, Friday, Feb. 6, 2026 in Cambridge, Mass.

Keke Palmer is a fish out of water in horror-comedy series based on cult movie 'The 'Burbs'

By Mark Kennedy
AP Entertainment Writer



Elizabeth Morris | Peacock via AP

This image released by Peacock shows Julia Duffy, from left, Keke Palmer, Paula Pell and Mark Proksch in a scene from 'The Burbs.'

NEW YORK — The suburbs are anything but bland in the new Peacock series "The 'Burbs," where strange things are going on. Like how jokes mix with the dread.

Inspired by the 1989 Tom Hanks-led movie of the same name, "The 'Burbs" follows a new mom as she navigates a foreign world of white picket fences and manicured lawns while also investigating a possible murder.

"It's got the comedy, it has the drama, it's got the mystery, it's got the horror, the thrills, the suspense — all of it," says Celeste Hughey, the creator, writer and executive producer. All eight episodes drop Friday.

Hanks is replaced by Keke Palmer, who plays a newlywed and new mom who moves into her husband's family home in fictional Hinkley Hills, where everyone is in everybody else's business. "Suburbia is a spectator sport," she is told.

Across the street is an abandoned home, where a local teen disappeared decades ago. Palmer's Samira soon joins forces with a band of off-beat suburbanites to help solve the case, even if her own husband had some sort of role.

"I really wanted to focus on that fish-out-of-water feeling, centering Samira as a Black woman in a white suburb who is a new mom, a new wife — new everything — and trying to figure out where she belongs in the environment," says Hughey.

Jokes and social commentary

The cast includes Jack Whitehall as Samira's husband and the trio of Julia Duffy, Mark Proksch and Paula Pell as her wine-swilling, investigating neighbors who form a sort of found family.

"The movie came out when I was quite young, but I remember seeing it as a kid and it being like this terrifying movie to me," says Hughey. "But revisiting it as an adult, it's just like the most timely movie."

The scripts crackle with witty humor, from references to Marie Kondo to "Baby Reindeer," and jokes often improvised by the actors. Chocolate brownies are described as "the Beyoncé of desserts" and there's a joke about how white ladies love salad.

"The 'Burbs" also touches on more serious issues over its eight episodes — microaggressions, racial profiling, bullying and childhood trauma — but takes a kooky, off-beat approach.

"I always look at things with a sense of humor," says Hughey. "I think comedy is a way to be able to examine all these pretty heavy subjects, but in a way that's accessible, in a way that is clarifying."

Palmer says she grew up watching Norman Lear shows and admired his ability to both entertain and address social tensions — something she found in "The 'Burbs."

"When I read this script for the first time, then as we started doing the show, it started to become clear that we had an opportunity to do the same thing," Palmer says. "We can expose cliches, we can lean into things, which is one of the greatest tools of satire and comedy in itself, and horror as well, because horror can play as a good allegory for the issues in our life."

'Play in both genres'

Whitehall, who grew up in the London suburb of Putney, says he appreciates that the social commentary never feels that heavy handed between the comedy and horror: "It was great to sort of be able to play in both genres."

There are multiple nods to the original movie, like picking the last name Fisher after the late actor Carrie Fisher, who appeared in the Hanks-led version, and naming a dog Darla after the name of the pup who starred in the 1989 version. Hanks, himself, appears in a blink-or-you'll-miss-it image.



Elizabeth Morris | Peacock via AP

This image released by Peacock shows Kapil Talwakar, background from left, Jack Whitehall and Keke Palmer in a scene from 'The Burbs.'

There's a scene where Samira steps onto her neighbor's grass and leaves suddenly swirl around her feet menacingly, an echo to the original. And there's a moment when sardines and pretzels are served, a riff off a classic moment in the movie. The creators even asked original actor Wendy Schaal to return to play the town librarian.

"I really wanted to honor the original fans of the movie and make sure that they see that someone who respects the original material and loves the movie had it in their hands," says Hughey. "I see the fans."

Hughey said she wrote the series with Palmer's voice in mind, a piece of manifesting that turned out to actually work when she first met Palmer over a year later.

The music ranges from Bill Withers' "Lovely Day" to Steve Lacy's "Dark Red" to Doechii's "Anxiety" and Big Pun's "I'm Not a Player."

"Music is very much a part of my creative process and something that I wanted to stand out in the show as well," says Hughey. "I got to pull in so many of my inspiration songs."

Keaton

From page 7C

Keaton then jousted with the figure before stabbing it after the statue told him, "I thought your performance in 'Birdman' was subpar."

He later was dressed up as a McDonald's worker, a reference to his role playing Ray Kroc in a movie about the making of the fast food megachain. Armed with a spatula, he served a single customer who increasingly demanded bigger and bigger burgers while Keaton tried his best.

"You didn't think I could do this. Make a huge burger for the guy," Keaton said.

Keaton then received his Pudding Pot. After spending the day on campus, he praised Harvard students.

"I'm ridiculously encouraged about this country," he said. "The older generation not so much. Man, these people I've met are extraordinarily impressive. It's been a ball. Based on these people, we are in good shape folks."

Afterward he took questions from reporters and recalled his time working with Catherine O'Hara, the Canadian-born comic actor and "SCTV" alum who died last week. Keaton starred alongside O'Hara in "Beetlejuice" and "The Paper," along with the small movie "Game 6," in which she played the ex-wife of Keaton's character.



AP Photo

Actor Michael Keaton participates in a roast at Harvard University's annual Hasty Pudding Theatricals Man of the Year award show at Farkas Hall, Friday, Feb. 6, 2026, in Cambridge, Mass.

"I was just always a giant fan like everyone else," Keaton said while recalling the early days of her career. "What was great about Catherine's career to me was ... inside the comedy world, she was already kind of a goddess. ... She wasn't really famous or anything, but we all knew how brilliant she was and how great she was and what a nice woman she was. And so then it started to take off for her."

Keaton also recalled how much he came to admire Kroc in the making of the movie and made sure Kroc understood they would not "sugarcoat" or "soften" his portrayal.

Keaton added that for all Kroc's faults, "He was an unbelievably hard worker. That was the thing I hung on to, that determination."

Actor Jon Hamm won the award last year. Other recent honorees have included Clint Eastwood, Tom Hanks, Robert De Niro, Harrison Ford, Samuel L. Jackson and Ryan Reynolds.

Hasty Pudding's Woman of the Year, which dates to 1951, will be awarded Feb. 13 to Australian actor Rose Byrne.

Friday's event comes days after the Justice Department released a huge trove of records surrounding Jeffrey Epstein, a longtime donor to the organization. The documents provided new details about the amount of money Epstein had given to Hasty Pudding roughly between 2013 and 2019, regularly donating $50,000 each year to secure top-tier donor status and receiving perks of free tickets and other gifts in return, totaling more than $300,000.

The donations were made through the Jeffrey Epstein Virgin Islands Foundation and Gratitude for America, a charity affiliated with Epstein.

In an undated news release announcing Epstein's donations, Hasty Pudding officials described Epstein as a "well-known science and Harvard philanthropist" and said he "put his substantial support behind Harvard's famous and oldest theatrical troupe."

A spokesperson for Hasty Pudding directed questions to Andrew Farkas, chairman of the Hasty Pudding Institute of 1770, which includes the theatrical group. Hasty Pudding organizers did not address the Epstein donations during Keaton's news conference.

From stilettos to safety concerns on Inauguration Day: 4 takeaways from Melania Trump's new movie

By Darlene Superville
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The new documentary "Melania" opens on a close-up of the trademark stilettos of first lady Melania Trump as she walks the halls of Mar-a-Lago, her Palm Beach home, in early January 2025, following her as she climbs into a dark SUV for the short drive to the airport and a flight aboard her husband's personal plane to New York and their Trump Tower penthouse home.

The movie, which stretches nearly two hours, is a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the first lady's life during the 20 days before she resumed the role last year. The first lady, who is known to fiercely protect her privacy, had film crews follow her in Palm Beach, Florida; New York City and Washington, during that window to show her transition from a private citizen to public figure to an audience that mostly regards her as kind of a mystery.

"With this film, I want to show the American people my journey," she says in the documentary, which opened Jan. 30, in theaters in the U.S. and around the world.

Here are some takeaways:

The first lady focuses on getting details just right

Viewers follow Melania Trump through a variety of meetings — and fittings — where the former fashion model appears keenly focused on the precise fit of her inaugural coat and hat and the gown she plans to wear to the balls. In one of the scenes where she's wearing the coat, she asks for it to be tightened around her hips. In another, after she comes downstairs in the strapless gown, her request is for the black trim at the top to be fixed straight across and to not flop.

She reviews the minute arrangements for a pre-inaugural candlelight dinner in Washington for President Donald Trump's donors, such as the invitations and the caviar served inside a golden egg. And she works on furnishing the family's private living quarters on the second floor of the White House. She asks her interior designer for a bigger bed for their son, Barron, "because he's much taller now" than in Trump's first term.

She meets with powerful women

Melania Trump, who was involved in every aspect of the film's development, includes scenes from meetings with some powerful women before Inauguration Day: a video call with Brigitte Macron, the French president's wife, to discuss working together on children's initiatives, and a sit-down with Queen Rania of Jordan.

She also meets with Aviva Siegel, who had been held hostage by Hamas militants after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, and whose husband of 44 years was still in captivity at the time of the meeting. The film's credits say Melania Trump played a key role in winning the release of Siegel's husband.

Melania was concerned about safety on Inauguration Day

She and President Trump attend a meeting with Secret Service officials to review plans for the day. Told that there will be several points along the parade route where they could get out of the limousine to walk along Pennsylvania Avenue, she asks, "Is it safe?"

She doesn't appear reassured by the answer, and says she knows Barron will not get out of the car. Trump had been the target of two assassination attempts during his campaign, including one at a rally in Pennsylvania in which his ear was grazed by a bullet and a supporter standing behind him was fatally shot.

Trump eventually moved the traditional outdoor inauguration ceremony indoors due to concerns about bitterly cold weather, and the parade was moved indoors to the Capital One Arena.

Melania Trump, who narrates the documentary, calls it a "practical decision" to move the parade. "But in truth, I was relieved," she says.

Melania says she wants to modernize the role of first lady

She says in the film that she wants to move beyond the traditional "social duties" of first ladies. In some ways, she's already done so, especially with the documentary.



AP Photo

First lady Melania Trump arrives for the premiere of her movie 'Melania' at The John F. Kennedy Memorial Center For The Performing Arts, Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026, in Washington.



AP Photo

President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump arrive for the premiere of her movie 'Melania' at The John F. Kennedy Memorial Center For The Performing Arts, Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026, in Washington.

Presidents and first ladies generally wait until they leave the White House to pursue such projects to avoid questions about possible conflicts of interest or ethics.

The film, announced before the Trumps returned to the White House, is the product of a reported $40 million deal with AmazonMGM Studios. Amazon does business with the federal government, and co-founder Jeff Bezos has sought to improve relations with the president.

Melania Trump also has not been tied to living in the White House. In Trump's first term, she took the unusual step of living in New York for several months so that Barron, then in elementary school, could finish the school year. In the second term, she spent much of the first year in New York and Florida working on the film.

A teen couldn't find her mom's 30-year-old demo tape. The internet stepped in

By Dugan Arnett
The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — The long-lost demo tape had always held a certain mythos in Charlotte Astor's imagination.

For years, the Cherry Hill, New Jersey, teen had heard stories about it, recorded about 30 years ago by her mother's very loud, very short-lived, teenage hardcore band, Seed.

Shannon Astor, now 47, had been a vocalist for the group, just 14 or 15 years old, at a time when female representation within the genre was rare. Within a year or so, the group had disbanded — but before it did, the group, which typically practiced in a member's parents' basement, recorded a single demo. There had been only a few dozen copies produced back then, and they had all sold, scattering out around the South Jersey area.

For Charlotte, the tape became a kind of white whale — a relic of her mother's hard-charging past, something the teen occasionally scoured the web for, to no avail.

She'd never heard her mother's band. And she wanted to. Badly.

"Ninety-five percent of what I have about my mother is in the stories she tells me," says Charlotte, 16, a junior at Cherry Hill High School East.

But a demo was something tangible. Something concrete.

"A demo," she decided, "I can find."

And so one night last spring, that's what she set out to do.

She had little to go on: A rough estimate of when the demo would have been released (1993-94), a general geographic location (South Jersey), and a single lyric (*"In the wind of the AM shadows cling to nearby trees as season shifts to satisfy the light from above"*).

"I have been looking for this tape for 4 years," she wrote in an appeal to her 1,000 or so Instagram followers, "... and it would mean the absolute world to me to find this tape."

But something about her search — this desire to connect with a parent, to bridge a gap three decades wide — resonated. It became, within the tight-knit confines of the hardcore music scene, a united pursuit.

At an age when most teenagers couldn't get far enough away from their parents, here was one launching a quixotic quest to better understand hers.

Soon, strangers from across the country were digging through old boxes in basements, or tagging old running buddies from Jersey's 1990s hardcore scene in social media posts. Some reached out to old producers from the area, wondering whether the demo might have made its way into some dusty studio corner.

Messages poured in, too — hundreds of them — with suggestions ranging from the plausible to the outlandish. Had she tried getting in touch with Bruce Springsteen's people? You never know what the Boss might have stowed away in some mansion closet.

"I suddenly had communication with so many people who I thought I would never in my life have any connection with," Charlotte said. "California to Jersey, and everything in between."

The lead singer of a well-known Jersey straight-edge band of the era, Mouthpiece, joined the search, messaging Charlotte after others reached out to him about the tape. (He vaguely remembered her mother, Shannon, but not the band.)

Much of the outside help, Charlotte notes, has come from the hardcore community.

Indeed, much of Charlotte's young life is rooted in the same hardcore music scene that her mother's once was. Like Shannon before her, Charlotte spends many nights at hardcore shows around the area, photographing the scene for the magazine she self-publishes, "Through Our Eyes." And like her mother previously, she's a member of the "straight-edge" hardcore community, a group with a shared collection of ideals that includes abstaining from drinking or drugs. (Her first flirtation with teenage rebellion came when she snuck out of the house one night to go to her favorite record store.)

And though her mother does not necessarily share Charlotte's zeal for locating the old tape — "I'm not waiting for some garage band demo to be unearthed," Shannon joked — she understands what it would mean to her daughter to have it.

"It's special to me only because of how much she needed to hear it," said Shannon. "I'm just so pro-Charli and everything that she does ... But this is her journey, and something that was intrinsically important to her."

To those in the scene, meanwhile, the response has been very *hardcore*.

"A bunch of people banding together to help this random girl find her mom's thing," said Quinn Brady, 19, of New York, and a friend of Charlotte's. "Most people assume that hardcore people are not very nice or friendly. [But] there's this inherent kinship. It connects people across the nation in a way that not a lot of other genres of music do."

Those outside the hardcore scene have been no less enthralled, however.

In December, after NJ.com picked up the story, further extending its reach, a documentary filmmaker reached out about the possibility of doing a film on her quest.

Last year, after posting in some "old-head" hardcore Facebook groups about the tape, Shane Reynolds — a member of the Philly-based hardcore band God Instinct — stumbled upon what appeared to be the most promising lead yet.

"I found the guy who allegedly made the demo," Reynolds said.

But when she got the man on the phone, Reynolds says, it proved to be a dead end.

The closest Charlotte came was last year, not long after she first posted about the demo on Instagram. Her mom's former bandmate in Seed, convinced he must have kept something from that period, recovered from storage an old cassette that featured a recording of a single Seed practice session.

Charlotte took it home, pushed it into the stereo in her bedroom. She stared at the ceiling as the tape began to play and 30 years fell away.

For the first time, she could put a sound to the stories she grew up hearing.

"The first thing I heard was a few seconds of my mom talking," Charlotte said. "That's my *mom*, when she was 16. I'm listening to a clip of my mother, listening to her at the same age I am."

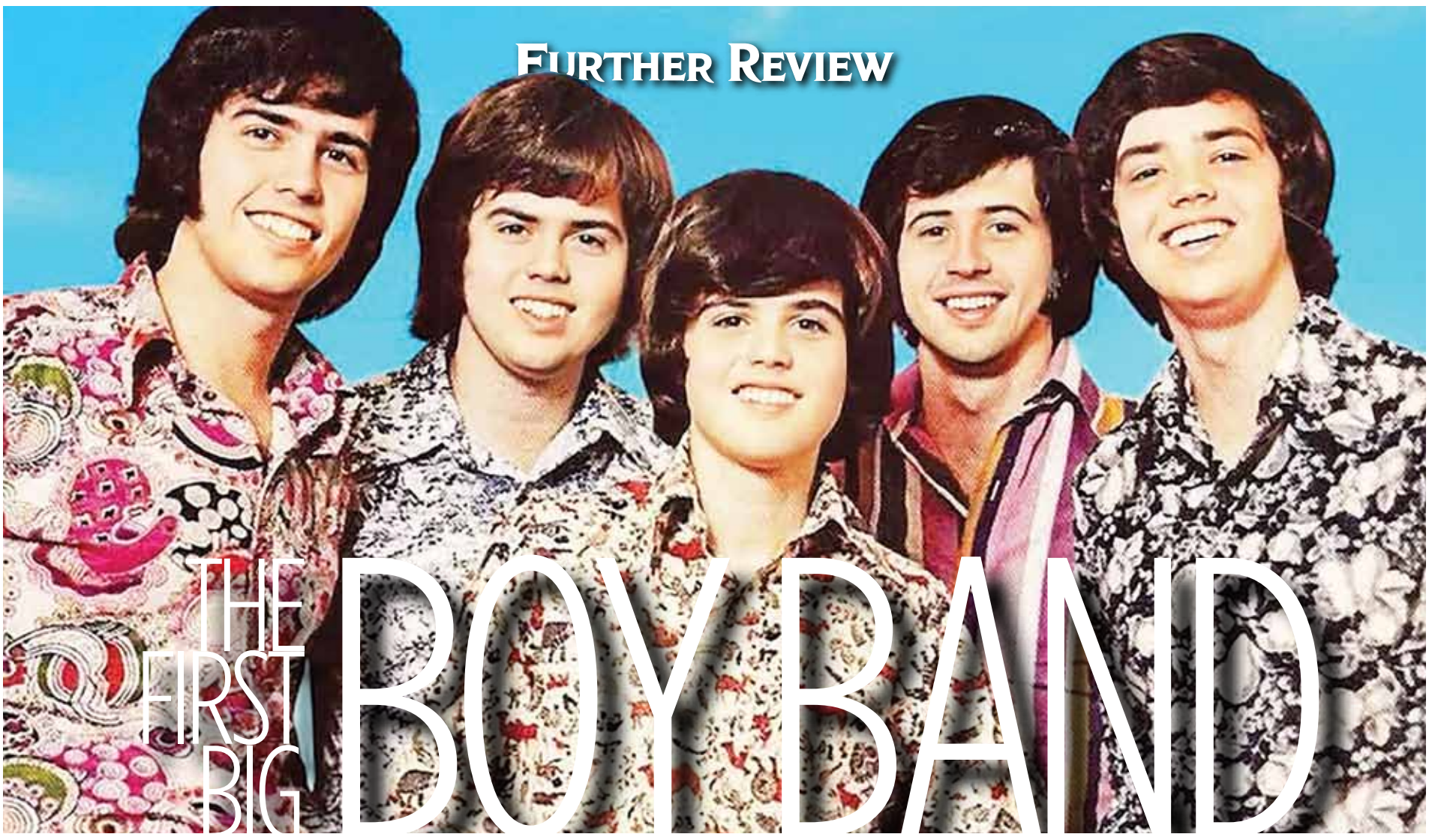
Still, that small taste has only reinforced her devotion to unearthing the actual demo.

Charlotte remains realistic about her odds of finding it. No, it's not likely to be found in some radio station's studio. And no, Bruce Springsteen is almost certainly not in possession of a three-decades old demo tape from her mother's teenage years.

But some graying hardcore fan from the '90s, with a penchant for hoarding and a cluttered garage?

Stranger things have happened.

"I have confidence — unwavering confidence — that someone has it," Charlotte says. "And that I will get my hands on it."



THE FIRST BIG BOY BAND

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The Osmonds — a singing group of brothers from Ogden, Utah, featuring a 13-year-old lead singer, plus a sister and an even younger brother — burst onto the pop music scene on Feb. 13, 1971.

That was when their first major release — "One Bad Apple" — began a month at No. 1 in the Billboard Hot 100. They'd place 11 singles in the Top 10 by the end of 1974.

A SINGING FAMILY FROM OGDEN, UTAH

The Osmond brothers began performing in 1959 in their Mormon church in Ogden, Utah, and found themselves invited to sing at other churches in the region.

They were visiting Disneyland in Anaheim, California, in 1962 when the park's in-house barbershop quartet realized the four kids wearing matching shirts could sing. They invited the brothers to sing for the crowd. Disney then offered them a job performing in the park.

One day, the father of singer and TV variety show host Andy Williams happened to hear them sing and recommended them to his son. The Osmond Brothers began appearing weekly on his show and soon became a quintet when young Donny joined his four brothers.

They released a handful of albums and singles on a small label and eventually learned how to play guitar, drums, keyboards and other instruments so they could perform a stand-alone show. Before long, the five brothers could play a combined total of 28 instruments.

In 1970, MGM Records signed the quintet — who now called themselves the Osmonds — to a recording contract. MGM assigned Rick Hall, a producer who was known for making rhythm & blues music and who owned his own studio in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, to the group.

It was there that the Osmonds recorded their first, self-titled album. It contained two Top-10 singles and went gold — as did the Osmonds' next four albums.



Donny and Marie in the late 1970s

MCA chose to handle the Osmonds much like Motown was handling the Jackson 5 brothers: It released the group's output but also solo songs by the lead singer, 13-year-old Donny. Donny, too, would land a song at No. 1 in 1971. The next year, the youngest Osmond brother, Jimmy, would have two single releases in the Hot 100, and, the year after that, the Osmond sister, Marie, would hit No. 5 with her first single.

Over time, the group's fame faded. They gravitated into country music. Donny and Marie hosted a popular TV variety show from 1976 to 1979.

Marie continued to record country hits while Donny staged a minor comeback in 1989.

THE OSMONDS' CHART HISTORY

= The Osmonds = Donny = Jimmy = Marie = Donny and Marie

RELEASED	PEAK ON THE BILLBOARD HOT 100 SINGLES CHART
Nov. 17, 1970	**One Bad Apple** — 5 weeks at No. 1 — #1
Feb. 27, 1971	**Sweet and Innocent** — #7
March 1971	#96 **I Can't Stop**
May 8, 1971	**Double Lovin'** — #14
July 31, 1971	**Go Away Little Girl** — 3 weeks at No. 1 — #1
Sept. 4, 1971	**Yo-Yo** — #3
Nov. 6, 1971	**Hey Girl** — #9
Jan. 15, 1972	**Down By the Lazy River** — #4
Feb. 19, 1972	**Puppy Love** — #3
March 25, 1972	**Long Haired Lover from Liverpool** — #38
June 10, 1972	**Too Young** — #13
June 1972	**Hold Her Tight** — #14
Aug. 12, 1972	**Why** — #13
September 1972	#68 **We Can Make It Together**
Oct. 14, 1972	**Crazy Horses** — #14
December 1972	**Tweedle Dee** — #59
Feb. 24, 1973	**The Twelfth of Never** — #8
June 2, 1973	**Goin' Home** — #36
July 7, 1973	**Young Love** — #25
July 14, 1973	**A Million to One** — #23
Aug. 25, 1973	**Paper Roses** — #5
Sept. 1, 1973	**Let Me In** — #36
Nov. 24, 1973	**When I Fall in Love** — #55
(B-side)	**Are You Lonesome Tonight** — #14
July 6, 1974	**I'm Leaving It All up to You** — #4
Aug. 31, 1974	**Love Me For a Reason** — #10
Nov. 16, 1974	**Morning Side of the Mountain** — #8
Feb. 15, 1975	**I Have a Dream** — #50
March 8, 1975	**Who's Sorry Now** — #40
May 24, 1975	**The Proud One** — #22
June 7, 1975	**Make the World Go Away** — #44
Dec. 13, 1975	**Deep Purple** — #14
June 5, 1976	**C'mon Marianne** — #38
September 1976	**I Can't Live a Dream** — #46
Nov. 27, 1976	**Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing** — #21
April 23, 1977	**This is the Way That I Feel** — #39
Nov. 19, 1977	**(You're My) Soul and Inspiration** — #38
Oct. 7, 1978	**On the Shelf** — #38
March 25, 1989	**Soldier of Love** — #2
June 17, 1989	**Sacred Emotion** — #13
Sept. 30, 1989	**Hold On** — #73
Oct. 13, 1990	**My Love is a Fire** — #21
Jan. 19, 1991	**Sure Lookin'** — #54

'ONE BAD APPLE DON'T SPOIL THE WHOLE BUNCH ... '

The first Osmonds hit was written by George Jackson, a staff songwriter for Hall's FAME Studios.

Jackson had written the song with the Jackson 5 — and lead singer Michael Jackson — in mind but Barry Gordy, the head of Motown Records, wouldn't agree to allow his group to record it. Mostly because Gordy didn't want to pay publishing royalties to someone outside his own organization.



Still, "One Bad Apple" shared strong similarities to the Jackson 5's output, including the backing track, the chorus featuring vocals by a 13-year-old and even the thematic content of the lyrics: The singer is trying to convince a girl to give him a chance, promising not to hurt her like her last boyfriend did. It's very similar to the Jackson 5's first No. 1 single in January 1970, "I Want You Back."

Hall's son said that after "One Bad Apple" became a big hit, Gordy sent Hall a telegram telling him to "Stop stealing my f**king music."

The brothers discovered right away what "One Bad Apple" had done to their popularity. Audiences that had previously sat and enjoyed the show became mobs of screaming preteen girls.

"I would come to the edge of the stage and reach my hand out and a couple of girls would grab my wrist." Donny remembered to People magazine. "My brother, Alan, saw what was happening. He would grab me and pull."

"Two things would go through my head – 'Alan, save me,' and 'Alan, let me go,' " Donny laughed. "I wanted so badly to have them pull me in the audience and just rip me apart."



In 1972, ABC launched an animated Saturday morning TV series featuring the Osmonds. "One Bad Apple" served as the show's theme song.

The show lasted only 17 episodes.

Sources: "The Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock and Soul" by Irwin Stambler, "The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits" by Joel Whitburn, Songfacts, People magazine, Stereogum.com, AOL.com, SoulfulDetroit.com, Discogs.com

PHOTO OF ANIMATED OSMONDS SHOW FROM RANKIN/BASS PRODUCTIONS. PHOTO OF DONNY AND MARIE FROM POLYDOR RECORDS. ALL OTHERS FROM MGM RECORDS.

PRINTABLE PUZZLES

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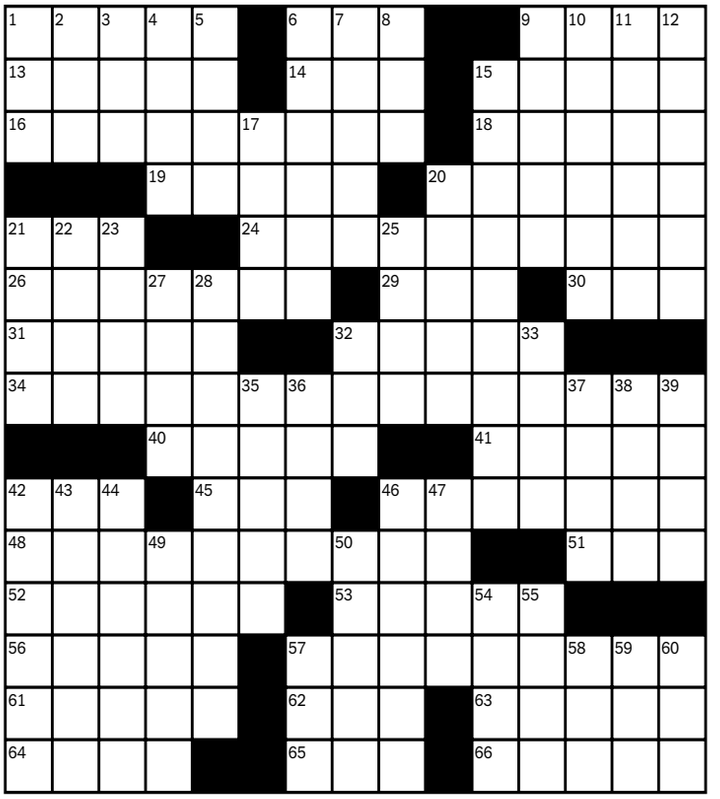
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ACROSS

1 Value
6 Volcanic coating that buried Pompeii
9 Overhead light?
13 Listlessness
14 Situation that precedes overtime
15 Fruit-peeling gadget
16 Meeting spot for a company's overseers
18 Ventilated
19 Actor Reeves who plays John Wick
20 Clothing
21 Wrestler-turned-actor with a trademark do
24 1976 film with Robert De Niro as an alienated cabbie
26 Lawyer, or a lawyer's advice
29 Gloppy gunk
30 Op-___ (newspaper pieces)
31 Advantageous quality
32 Aristocrat
34 Enjoy a vacation day, say
40 Reside
41 Burr who dueled with Hamilton
42 Wane
45 One ___ time
46 Mark Twain, for Samuel Langhorne Clemens
48 Bug killer that goes "smack!"
51 Losing general at Appomattox
52 Relating to a son or daughter
53 Fanny ___, central figure in Broadway's "Funny Girl"
56 Poet Dickinson
57 Gridiron success ... or, when read as two words, the conclusion to the sequence formed by the starts of 16-, 24-, 34- and 48-Across
61 Backpackers' shelters
62 Write-___ (unlikely election winners)
63 Home with a dome
64 Lumps of coal, for a snowman
65 Understand
66 Relinquished

DOWN

1 Spider's creation
2 Peace promoter Yoko
3 Cell's messenger material
4 Istanbul native
5 Conceal
6 Lacking a key, in music
7 Crazy Horse's people
8 Adjustable skirt feature
9 Port-au-Prince's country
10 Get there
11 Looked lasciviously
12 Commands
15 Police officer who monitors an assigned area
17 Label as G or R, say
20 Spicy marinade with chili peppers
21 Exam for a doctor-to-be
22 Parks honored in the Capitol's Statuary Hall
23 Walrus's long tooth
25 Composer Stravinsky
27 Have to have
28 Passengers getting an illicit free ride
32 Org. for Patriot games
33 Actor McGregor with a Golden Globe for "Fargo"
35 Pertaining to development in the womb
36 Off-key, in a way
37 Like some history or hygiene
38 City surrounding Vatican City
39 On bended ___
42 Overly refined
43 "Yikes!," to a Brit
44 Reporter's attribution atop an article
46 Read
47 Rock's Carmen or Clapton
49 Earthy deposits by a river
50 Steak similar to a porterhouse
54 Stylish
55 Margin
57 "___ better to have loved and lost ..."
58 Passé
59 Misfortune
60 Agree silently



PUZZLE BY LYNN LEMPEL

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

B	A	D	A	P	P	L	E	S	■	S	P	A	D	E
I	C	E	P	A	L	A	C	E	■	T	O	B	E	Y
L	A	S	T	D	A	N	C	E	■	A	M	B	L	E
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■	■	■	S	O	N	Y	■	M	U	L	L	E	T	■
■	R	O	T	C	■	■	M	O	R	E	O	V	E	R
M	I	N	S	K	■	B	O	N	D	■	S	I	T	E
A	C	E	■	S	P	I	C	E	U	P	■	A	H	I
H	E	M	I	■	E	B	A	Y	■	L	E	T	I	N
I	C	A	N	H	E	L	P	■	■	A	G	E	S	■
■	O	N	T	A	P	E	■	D	I	N	G	■	■	■
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O	K	A	N	D	■	A	U	N	A	T	U	R	E	L
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By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

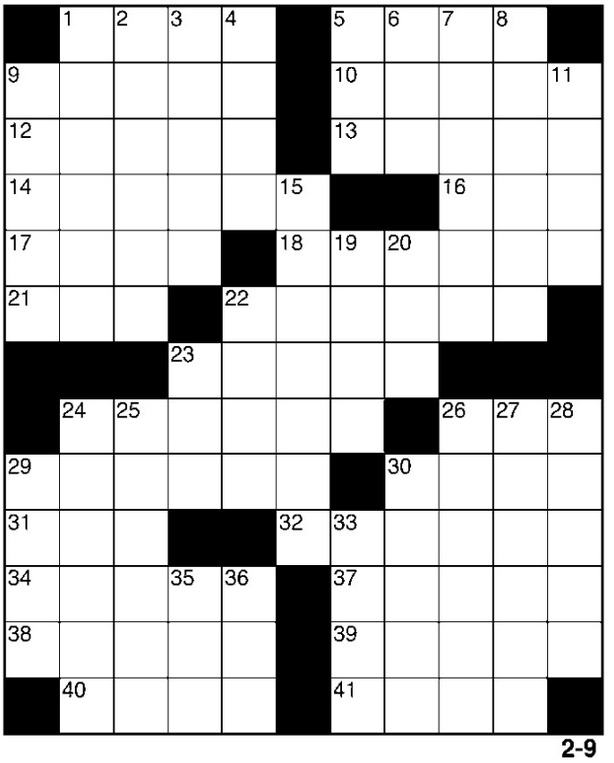
1 Stand against
5 Deck unit
9 Writer Levi
10 Met show
12 Quiver unit
13 Himalayan land
14 Free-for-alls
16 Lamb's mother
17 Eye part
18 Medicine bottles
21 Finish
22 Gains by force
23 Scarlett's last name
24 Flings
26 Quarterback Marino
29 Clan-based
30 Song sung singly
31 Acorn source
32 Shoulder warmers
34 Cuss
37 "Tomorrow" musical
38 Bad time for a batter
39 Spirited horse
40 Junk email
41 Challenging

DOWN

1 "Black Swan" director Aronofsky
2 Gofer's job
3 Currents
4 Mournful cry
5 Swindle
6 Gorilla, for one
7 Iterate
8 Speaks like a Southerner
9 Elevator lifter
11 Pub pints
15 Stretches out
19 That woman's
20 "Patience — virtue"
22 Horse halter
23 Sphere
24 Fishes with a net
25 Lift
26 Depressing topic
27 In cahoots
28 Was a snoop
29 Throw
30 Blitzen's boss
33 Diner dish
35 Dr.'s org.
36 LP speed unit

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

Saturday's answer



2-9

ACROSS

1 Recipe abbr.
4 Chairman of China
7 "— chic!"
11 Western tribe
13 Super Bowl VIP
14 Monet's supply
15 Baby-feeding finale
16 Director Spike
17 Japanese noodle
18 Grown-up
20 Gator's kin
22 Somewhat (Suff.)
24 Stick
28 French vineyard estate
32 School paper
33 Cabin components
34 Cloud setting
36 Batting practice enclosure
37 Put into law
39 Like beans in a burrito filling
41 — wheel (carnival ride)
43 Diner dessert
44 Billions of years
46 Arctic floaters
50 Barn roof spinner
53 Pear-shaped Middle Eastern instrument
55 Comedian Trevor
56 Port of Yemen
57 Teeny
58 Long story
59 Body pics
60 Pigs' digs
61 River blocker

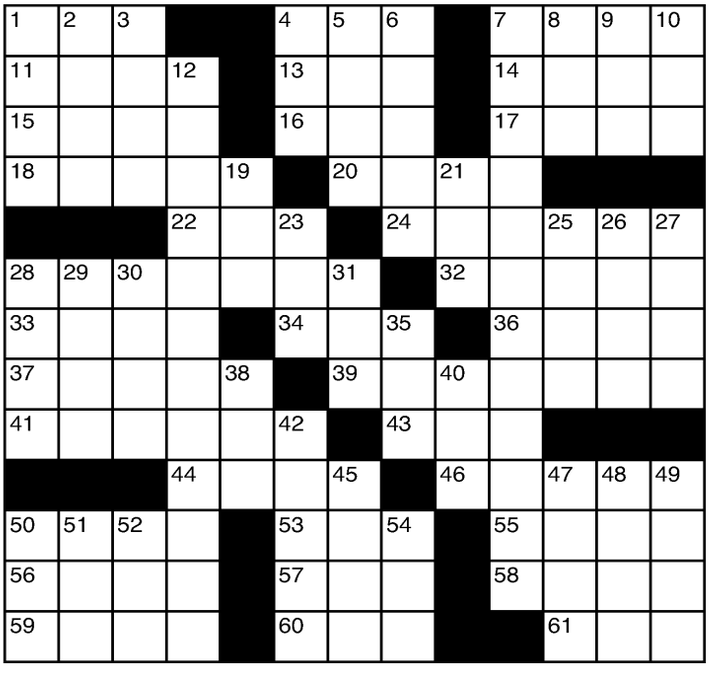
DOWN

1 Hefty horn
2 Poker type
3 Lima's land
4 Roman 2050
5 With (Fr.)
6 Verdi work
7 ATM features
8 Abolish
9 "Evil Woman" band
10 Nine-digit ID
12 Film techniques with divided frames
19 "The Waste Land" monogram
21 Keats creation
23 Possesses
25 Actor Morales
26 Fury
27 Ogled
28 Staff symbol
29 Sharpen
30 Petri dish gel
31 Kiev's land (Abbr.)
35 "You betcha!"
38 Uncle, to Raul
40 Little lie
42 Bamboozles
45 Fat
47 Fork setting
48 Infatuated
49 Counterfeit
50 Dyeing vessel
51 Nabokov novel
52 Mosquito barrier
54 Susan of "L.A. Law"

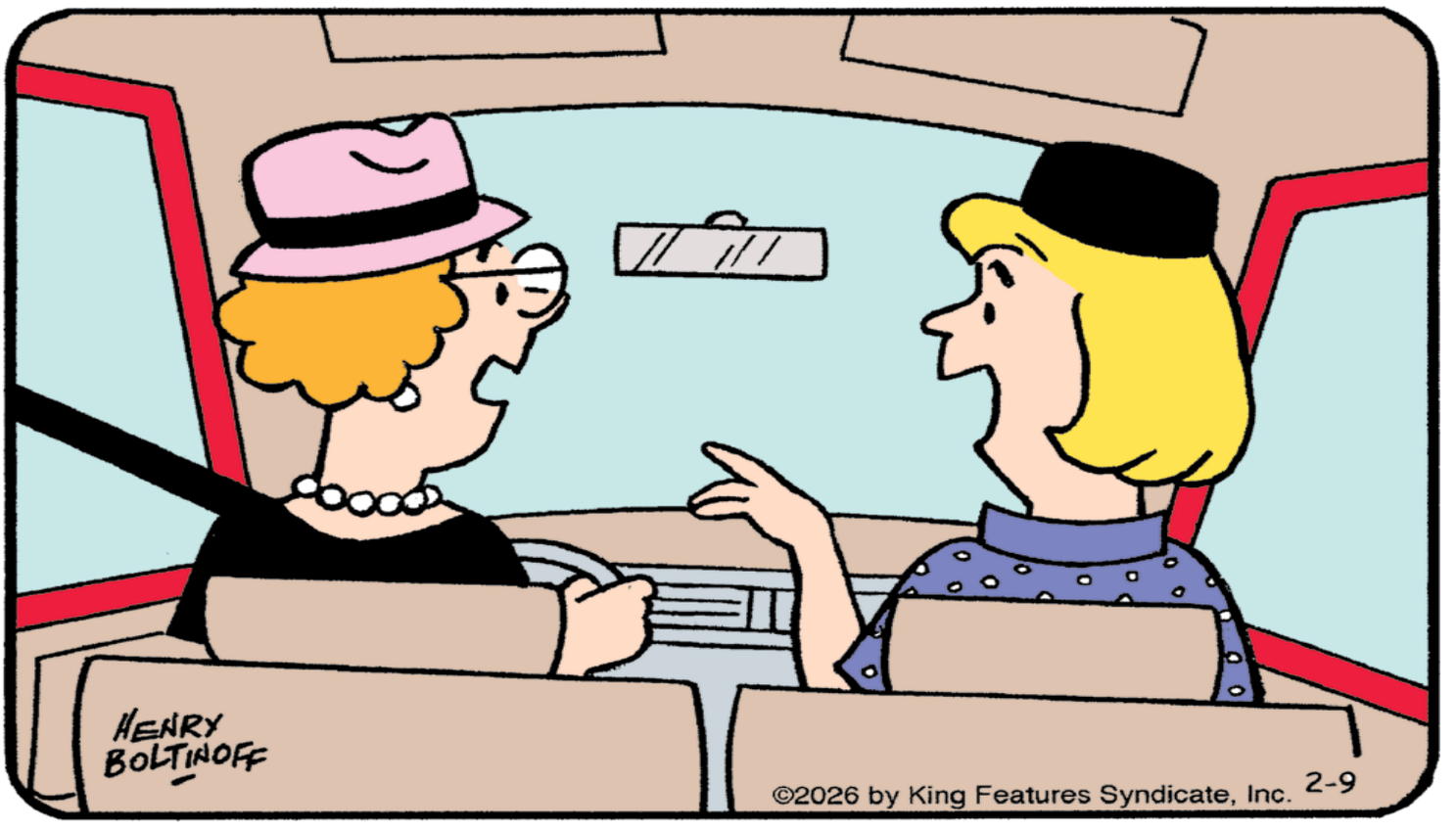
Solution time: 21 mins.

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

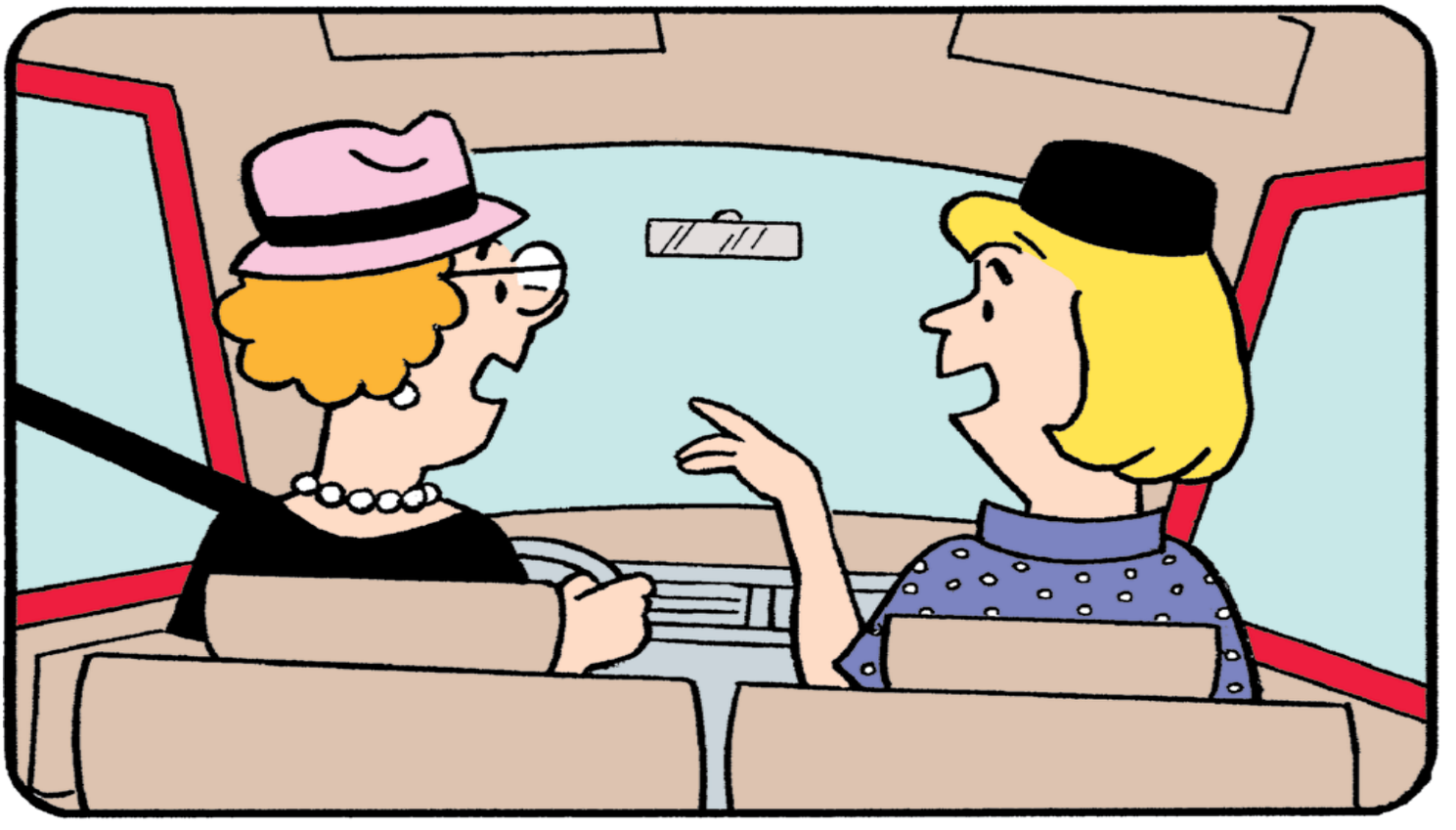
Saturday's answer 2-9



PRINTABLE PUZZLES



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Arm is longer. 2. Mirror is smaller. 3. Visor is moved. 4. Headrest is smaller. 5. Mouth is different. 6. Top of windshield is lower.

PRINTABLE PUZZLES

WORD SLEUTH ● — BUCKET

B Q E N K H T E B E Y W T R O

L J G L E E T S H E B Y W U R

P N K I B W G T U D B Z X V S

Q O M G N I G D E R D K I G E

C A Y W U N S S Q C E P N L J

H F E P I E D P I C I N A Y X

V U S K O R E T A W Q P N N M

K J C L A M S H E L L H L I F

E I C G B A Z R Y X L V A U D

K T R Q L P I O M L K O O I H

G E D P C F R O T A V A C X E

Saturday's unlisted clue: SIDE

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.
Monday's unlisted clue hint: STAINLESS — BUCKET

Clamshell	Drag	Ice	Rust
Coal	Dredging	Kicking the	Water
Collapsible	Excavator	Mop	Wine
Dinner	Fire	Plastic	

King Classic Sudoku

	3	4			1			
7					2			8
2	6		7	5			3	
		9	5		3		2	
4		2				3	1	6
	7			1			5	
3	4			2	6			
9		6	4	3	5	2		
	2	5	1	9			4	

Difficulty: ★ 2/9

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2-9 CRYPTOQUIP

M K L F A D K M A O M J O M P D K Q L

K M O L K Z X V A T V A X T E V F M A L F M K Z

T J O Z Z K W K Q W O T W O U

E K O M W O M P : E O P U K T T A .

Saturday's Cryptoquip: FILM ABOUT A DICTIONARY THAT'S GOT A WHOLE BUNCH OF COMMON WORDS OMITTED: "ABRIDGED TOO FAR."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P 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.

CGAOR

AHNEV

LYWOLE

DISEBE



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: ANNOY LOOPY MUTTER ODDITY
Answer: After loading his saw, hammer, etc. into his truck, the carpenter decided to — TOOL AROUND

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PRINTABLE PUZZLES

FROM NORTH AMERICA SYNDICATE INC., 300 W. 57th STREET, 41st FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10019

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY, FEB. 9, 2026

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: CAPES AND PENINSULAS
(e.g., In which country is the Labrador Peninsula? Answer: Canada.)

FRESHMAN LEVEL
1. This Florida cape was formerly named Cape Kennedy.
Answer_____
2. This cape in Chile marks where the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans meet.
Answer_____
3. The song lyrics say that "you're sure to fall in love with old Cape ____."
Answer_____

GRADUATE LEVEL
4. A common misconception is that this cape is the southern tip of Africa.
Answer_____
5. The Kamchatka Peninsula is in this eastern part of Russia, famous for its cold winters.
Answer_____
6. This cape is located on one of the barrier islands of North Carolina.
Answer_____

PH.D. LEVEL
7. This peninsula in West Asia is the world's largest.
Answer_____
8. Spain and Portugal are on this peninsula.
Answer_____
9. This peninsula makes up the northern part of a continent.
Answer_____

ANSWERS: 1. Cape Canaveral. 2. Cape Horn. 3. Cod. 4. Cape of Good Hope. 5. Siberia. 6. Cape Hatteras. 7. Arabian Peninsula. 8. Iberian Peninsula. 9. Antarctic Peninsula.

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?

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North America Syndicate Inc.

5	3	4	6	8	1	9	7	2
7	9	1	3	4	2	5	6	8
2	6	8	7	5	9	4	3	1
1	8	9	5	6	3	7	2	4
4	5	2	9	7	8	3	1	6
6	7	3	2	1	4	8	5	9
3	4	7	8	2	6	1	9	5
9	1	6	4	3	5	2	8	7
8	2	5	1	9	7	6	4	3

Difficulty: ★ 2/9

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— BUCKET

